

Crusty White Bread

Serves 8

I love fresh bread that has a chewy crust. In Ann Arbor, we have Zingerman's. I took a baking class at Zingerman's and learned that they have special ovens with water spray to help develop a chewy crust.

Later, I read in a Cooks Illustrated magazine that they had a method for achieving similar results at

home by cooking the bread in a Dutch oven. The handle must be able to take the 450-degree heat in this recipe and most plastic handles do not. I combined the Cook's Illustrated recipe with a simpler recipe on a blog by Nagi. ([Link](#)) Her version is faster and doesn't require kneading which is becoming more important to me as the arthritis in my thumbs is more bothersome.



Ingredients

- 3 cups bread flour (450g) + 1 Tbsp.
- 2 tsp. Kosher salt
- 2 tsp. (1 package) rapid or instant yeast
- 1 1/2 cups warm (120 deg.) water
- Non-stick spray
- 1/2 tsp. sesame seeds
- 1 cup coarsely shredded cheese (optional)
- 1/2 cup pesto (optional)

Equipment

- Large metal pot with metal handles
- Large spoon
- Scraper
- Plastic wrap
- Parchment paper
- Hot pads
- Cooling rack

Crusty White Bread:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Description	Time (min)
	Spray bowl with non-stick spray	1
	In a large bowl, whisk together 3 cups flour, 2 tsp. yeast, and 2 tsp. kosher salt	2
	Heat 1 1/2 cups water to 120 degrees	1
	With a large spoon, stir to combine into a loose, wet dough (see picture below)	1
	Cover with plastic wrap and allow to rise at room temperature until double in size	3 hrs.
	Refrigerate for 8 hrs. or up to 3 days	8 hrs.
	Place large pot and lid in the oven. Preheat to 450 degrees	
	Cut a piece of parchment paper large enough to lift the dough and small enough to fit in the pot.	1
	Transfer the dough onto the paper	1
	Sprinkle top with 1/2 tsp. sesame seeds	1
	Carefully remove the pot from the oven with hot pads and remove the lid. Lift the dough into the pot, replace the lid, and return to the oven	2
	Bake at 450 with the lid on	30
	Use paper towel to wipe sticky dough from the pan before washing.	2
	Remove lid and bake until golden brown	14
	Lift bread from pot using edges of paper. Transfer to a cooling rack. Allow to cool.	10
	Total: 4 hrs. 26 min	

