

bellevett's french bread

Ingredients:

4 cups unbleached flour
2 1/4 teaspoons yeast
2 cups warm water
1 teaspoons salt

Combine the yeast and warm water. While the yeast is dissolving, sift together the salt and flour. Turn on your oven light. (This will warm up your oven slightly and will help the dough rise)

While stirring slowly, add the warm yeast water to the flour mixture. The dough should come away from the sides and form a big ball. If it is too wet, add a little flour. If it is too dry, add a few more drops of warm water.

Turn out your dough onto a floured surface. *knead dough for about 10 minutes until your dough is shiny but not too sticky, adding flour when necessary.

lightly flour your mixing bowl and place dough inside. Cover with a damp dish towel and place in oven to rise until dough has doubled in size.

When the dough has doubled in size (about 1 1/2 to 2 hours), take dough out of oven and punch down. Turn dough onto floured surface and cut in half, into 2 equal pieces. Roll the two halves into long loaves and place into french loaf pan. Place a damp towel over the 2 loaves and let rise. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

When oven is preheated, or after 20 minutes, uncover loaves and cut 3-5 horizontal lines into the tops of each loaf. If you would like, you can brush the top with an eggwash (1 egg and 1 tablespoon of water mixed together) to gloss it up a bit.

Bake for 20 minutes, or until they sound hollow when tapped. Let them cool in the french loaf pan.