

Baguette and French Bread with 100% Freshly Milled Wheat

Two recipes in one—same dough, different shaping.

4.50 from 8 votes

Prep	Bake	Yield	Notes
2 hr 30 min	25 min	3 baguettes or 2 French loaves	100% freshly milled hard white wheat. Kamut works; active dry yeast allowed (longer rise).

Ingredients (1x batch)

Flour

5 cups freshly milled hard white wheat flour (mill about $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups wheat berries).

Liquids & Add-ins

- 2 cups warm water
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp cane sugar (*or* honey)
- 1 Tbsp instant yeast (*active dry* also works; allow longer rise)
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

Approx. Metric Equivalents (guideline)

Item	Metric (approx.)	Notes
Warm water	~480 mL	2 US cups
Sugar / honey	~22–25 mL	1.5 Tbsp (volume)
Instant yeast	~9–10 g	1 Tbsp
Olive oil	15 mL	1 Tbsp
Salt	~12–13 mL	2.5 tsp (volume; weight varies by type)
Freshly milled flour	~625–700 g	5 cups; whole wheat density varies—mix to a <i>tacky</i> dough

Flour weights are approximate; freshly milled whole wheat absorbs differently. Add flour gradually and stop when dough is soft and tacky.

Method

1. **Build a sponge (15–20 min).** In a mixer bowl or large bowl, combine: warm water, sugar (or honey), and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the freshly milled flour. Stir smooth, then add yeast and mix in. Let stand until slightly risen and bubbly (15–20 minutes).
No bubbles? Your yeast may be inactive—start over with fresh yeast.
2. **Mix the dough.** Add olive oil, salt, and ~2 more cups flour. Mix to combine. Then add *just enough* additional flour, a little at a time, until the dough begins to clean the bowl sides yet remains *tacky* to the touch.
3. **Knead to develop gluten.** Knead in mixer for ~9 minutes (or by hand 15–20 minutes) until smooth, elastic, and still *tacky*, not dry.
Avoid over-flouring; too much flour yields a dense crumb.
4. **First rise (bulk ferment).** Place dough in a lightly oiled bowl (or leave in mixer bowl), cover, and rise until doubled, about 30–45 minutes.
5. **Divide & pre-shape.** Turn the still-tacky dough onto a lightly floured surface. For **baguettes**: divide into 3 equal pieces. For **French bread loaves**: divide into 2 equal pieces. Lightly flour or wet hands if needed.
6. **Final shaping.** For each piece, roll into a rectangle about 10 in wide and 6–7 in tall. Fold the top third to the center and seal the seam. Fold again to the edge and seal. Roll into a cylinder: **baguette** = long and slender; **French bread** = slightly shorter and plumper.
7. **Proof.** Place seam-side down on baguette/French bread pans, or on a floured tea towel (couche) with pleats between loaves. Cover and rise until nearly doubled (~30 minutes).
8. **Preheat & steam.** While loaves proof, preheat oven to 425°F. Just before baking, score each loaf (diagonal slashes) and brush or mist with water (egg wash yields a darker, shinier crust).
9. **Bake.** Bake at 425°F for 10 minutes, then reduce to 375°F and bake about 15 minutes more, or until an internal temperature of 190°F is reached.
10. **Cool & serve.** Transfer to a rack and cool about 10 minutes. Tear apart or slice with a bread knife.

Shaping Guide & Tips

Baguette vs. French Bread: Same dough—*shape* sets the style. Baguettes are longer and slimmer; French loaves are a bit shorter and fuller.

Flour choice: Hard white wheat gives the lightest result. If needed, use a blend of $\frac{2}{3}$ hard red wheat + $\frac{1}{3}$ soft white wheat.

Crust control: For a crustier crust, extend the initial 425°F phase by 1–2 minutes (ovens vary—experiment).

Active dry yeast: Works fine; expect slightly longer rise times.

Hydration matters: Freshly milled flour absorbs more. Keep the dough *tacky*; resist adding excess flour.

Scaling: Ingredients listed for 1x. For 2x or 3x, multiply quantities accordingly.