

CARAWAY RYE BREAD

[TWO LOAVES]

Light in color yet surprisingly rye in flavor, this loaf is especially fine for sandwiches. I make this in loaf pans rather than forming hearth loaves

on baking sheets, which is usually done. The bread is excellent for rye toast which few people try.

INGREDIENTS

2 packages dry yeast
2 cups warm water (105°–115°)
2 cups rye flour
3 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon salt
2 tablespoons caraway seeds
4 to 4½ cups all-purpose flour, approximately
2 tablespoons shortening, room temperature

BAKING PANS

Two medium (8½ x 4½) loaf pans, greased or Teflon, metal or glass. If the latter, reduce oven heat 25°.

PREPARATION 15 mins.

In a large bowl, add the yeast to water, stir briskly for a moment and put aside for 3 minutes.

Measure the rye flour into the bowl and add sugar, salt, caraway seeds, 1 cup flour, and shortening. Beat until smooth—about 100 strokes. Stir in the balance of the flour, a half cup at a time, first with the spoon and then by hand. The dough will be a rough, shaggy mass that cleans the sides of the bowl.

KNEADING 6 mins.

Turn dough onto lightly floured work surface—counter top or bread board—and knead until smooth, about 100 push-turn-fold motions. Sprinkle additional flour to control the stickiness.

FIRST RISING 1 hour

Return dough to the mixing bowl and pat with buttered or greased fingertips to keep the surface from crusting. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and move to a warm place (80°–85°) until the dough has risen to about twice its original size. You can test if it has risen by poking a finger in it; the dent will remain.

RESTING 15 mins.

Turn back the plastic wrap and punch down dough with the fingers. Fold the dough into the center and turn it over in the bowl. Replace the plastic wrap and let it rest for 15 additional minutes.

SHAPING 15 mins.

Punch down the dough, knead for 30 seconds to press out the bubbles, and divide into two pieces with a sharp knife. Shape into balls and let rest under a towel for 3 or 4 minutes. Form the loaves by pressing each ball into a flat oval, roughly the length of the baking pan. Fold the oval in half, pinch the seam tightly to seal.

Tuck under the ends and place in the pan, seam down. Repeat with the second piece.

SECOND RISING
45 mins.

Place the pans in the warm place, cover with wax paper and leave until the center of the dough has reached level with the top of the pan.

BAKING
400°
40–50 mins.

Preheat oven to 400°. Bake loaves in the oven. When tapping the bottom crust yields a hard and hollow sound, they are done. If not, return to the oven for an additional 10 minutes. Midway in the bake period shift the pans so the loaves are exposed equally to temperature variations in the oven.

FINAL STEP

Remove bread from the oven. Turn the loaves out of the pans and place on a metal rack to cool before serving.