

# GERMAN RAISIN BREAD

[A CHOICE OF LOAVES]

Whole almonds or pecans encrusted on the loaf—top and bottom—are a sign that this is a special bread. The sweet dough, tinted faintly with cinnamon, is finely textured and moist with potato. However, it is the big swirl of raisins, nuts, candied fruit and cinnamon inside that gives the loaf its character and exceptionally good taste. Whole nut meats are



placed in the bottom of the baking pan before the loaf is set in, and then more nuts, dipped in egg, are placed on the top.

This recipe will make 3 medium loaves and 2 small ones—ideal for gifts. Warm to serve. Freeze sealed in foil or plastic.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 packages dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lukewarm water ( $105^{\circ}$ – $115^{\circ}$ )
- 8 cups all-purpose flour, approximately
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, room temperature
- 1 cup finely sieved cooked potato or  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup instant potato mixed in 1 cup water
- 2 cups warm milk ( $105^{\circ}$ – $115^{\circ}$ )
- 2 eggs, room temperature, and slightly beaten
- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ( $\frac{1}{2}$  stick) butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- The filling:  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of raisins
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups coarsely chopped candied cherries
- 1 cup finely chopped nuts
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped citron
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons soft butter
- 24 whole almonds or pecans
- 1 beaten egg

#### BAKING PANS

Three medium ( $8\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ ) and two small ( $7\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ ) loaf pans, greased or Teflon, glass or metal. If glass, reduce oven heat  $25^{\circ}$ . Other choices of loaf sizes may be made by consulting the dough volume chart on page 23.

#### PREPARATION

Sponge  
20 mins.

In a small bowl or measuring cup, dissolve yeast and sugar in water. Stir and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl stir 4 cups of flour and salt. Add butter or margarine and potato. Stir in milk and the yeast mixture. Mix thoroughly—100 strokes.

2 hours

Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and move to a warm place ( $80^{\circ}$ – $85^{\circ}$ ), free from drafts. Allow the sponge to rise until doubled in volume.

Dough  
10 mins.

Turn back plastic wrap, stir sponge briefly. Add eggs, sugar, butter and cinnamon. Gradually add more flour



—about 3 or 4 cups, sufficient to form a soft mass that cleans the sides of the bowl. If it is moist and sticky, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup or more flour.

8 mins.

Turn the dough onto a floured work surface and knead with a strong push-turn-fold action until the dough is smooth and elastic. Keep the work surface and fingers dusted with flour until the dough has lost all of its stickiness and becomes firm under the hands.

FIRST RISING  
1 hour

Return the dough to the bowl, cover again and let rise until double in bulk.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling by mixing in a bowl the raisins, chopped candied cherries, chopped nuts, and citron. In a cup combine and have ready sugar and cinnamon. Melt butter in a small pan.

SHAPING  
30 mins.

Turn the dough out onto the lightly floured work surface, counter top or bread board, and knead briefly to press out the bubbles. Divide the dough into however many loaves you have decided to bake. (See the dough volume chart, page 23.)

Roll each piece into a rectangle (9 x 12 for a medium loaf). Brush with butter and spread on the sugar and cinnamon mix. Leave a dry 1-inch margin around the edges so that a strong seam can be made. Divide the fruit-nut mixture among the pieces of dough. Smooth in place but keep it away from the margins.

Roll as you would a jelly roll, starting from a short side. Make the roll tight to avoid air spaces in the finished loaf. When the roll is almost to the end of the rectangle, lift up the edge of dough and pinch it to the roll. Don't take the roll all the way to the edge because this could push the filling into the cleared margin. Fold the ends to seal.

Scatter a few nuts on the bottom of the pans before placing the loaves.

SECOND RISING  
1 hour

Cover the loaves with the wax paper and move them to the warm place until they have doubled in volume.

BAKING  
350°  
45 mins.

Preheat oven to 350°. Dip 12 or 15 nuts in beaten egg in a cup and lightly press in a pattern on top of each loaf. Bake in the oven until the loaves are nicely browned and loose in their pans. Turn one loaf out of its pan and tap the bottom crust with a forefinger. A hard hollow sound means the bread is done. If not, re-



turn loaf to the oven, without the pan if you wish a deeper over-all brown crust.

**FINAL STEP**

Remove bread from the oven. Turn the loaves out onto wire racks to cool. Brush each loaf generously with melted butter.