

DUTCH ROGGEBROOD

[TWO LOAVES]

This version of the famous Dutch Roggebrood is a solid brick of unleavened rye, and solidly good to eat.

A Dutch woman vacationing in a small English inn in East Anglia, where I was bicycling, gave me this recipe after I had described vividly a delicious bread I had eaten in Amsterdam a number of years before. Roggebrood is sliced wafer thin ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch) and served buttered with a very thin slice of ham and cheese on it. Roggebrood, one of three kinds

of bread usually served at a Dutch breakfast, will keep almost indefinitely wrapped in plastic.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups potato water (from boiling 3 or 4 diced-up potatoes)
½ cup molasses
7 cups rye flour
1 tablespoon salt
½ cup brewer's yeast (for taste only; not for leavening)
2 tablespoons caraway seeds, ground

BAKING PANS

Two medium (8½ x 4½) loaf pans, greased. Also a larger pan in which to place these two pans while the bread is steamed.

PREPARATION

20 mins.

Beforehand, boil 3 or 4 diced-up potatoes to get 2 cups of potato water. The potatoes may be used in other dishes as only the water is used in this recipe.

15 mins.

Pour boiling potato water into a large mixing bowl and add molasses, rye flour, salt, brewer's yeast, and caraway seeds.

Be forewarned—this will be a sticky, clinging mess that won't get better no matter how long it is worked because there is little of the magic gluten in rye flour.

When the dough has cooled, use a spoon (and the hands, sparingly) to blend all the ingredients together.

FORMING

10 mins.

Spoon the dough into pans. Dampen the fingers and push the dough into the corners, and smooth the surface.

Cover the two pans tightly with foil. Place them in a large pan and fill with hot water an inch or so around the dough-filled tins. Cover the large pan with a lid or improvise a cover from aluminum foil to keep the steam from escaping.

BAKING

250°

5 hours

Preheat oven. Carefully lift the covered pan into the oven and turn the heat to 250° for a very slow oven. Steam, covered, for 3 hours. Remove foil and lift out bread pans. Uncover the pans but be careful of steam when you do. Remove the large water-filled pan and empty. Remove the foil from the bread pans and return to the oven for an additional hour, still at 250°.

Turn off the heat. Remove the bread from the pans but return to the oven to dry out on the oven shelf for one hour, or a total of 5 hours.