

# Injera Bread

## Ingredients

Teff flour, whole grain . . . . .	2 cups	Baking powder . . . . .	¼ tsp.
Water, filtered/bottled . . . . .	3 cups	Vegetable oil . . . . .	1 tsp.
Active dry yeast . . . . .	¼ tsp.		
Salt . . . . .	½ tsp.		

## Directions

Measure **teff flour** — Dissolve **yeast** in ¼ cup warm **water** ( $105-110^{\circ}F$ )

### Day 1 (Morning)

1. In a large non-reactive bowl, dissolve **active dry yeast** in ¼ cup warm **water** ( $105-110^{\circ}F$ ). Let stand *5 minutes* until foamy. (*Water must be chlorine-free to allow fermentation*)
2. Add **teff flour** and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  cups room temperature **water** to yeast mixture. Whisk vigorously until completely smooth with no lumps. The batter should be thin, similar to crepe batter, and coat a spoon in a thin layer.
3. Cover bowl loosely with clean kitchen towel or cheesecloth (do not seal—fermentation produces  $CO_2$  that must escape). Place in warm location ( $68-75^{\circ}F$ ) away from direct sunlight.

### Days 2-3 (Fermentation)

4. Monitor fermentation progress *twice daily*. Healthy fermentation indicators:
  - Surface bubbling and active foaming
  - Pleasant sour aroma (lactic fermentation, similar to yogurt)
  - Thin layer of clear liquid (hooch) on surface—stir this back in
  - Batter will thin slightly as enzymatic activity breaks down starches

5. Check for contamination signs (see detailed notes on page 2). If contamination is suspected, discard and restart.
6. Batter is ready when it shows active bubbling, smells pleasantly sour, and has fermented for *48-72 hours*. In cooler environments, full fermentation may require *3 days*.

## Cooking Day

7. Thin batter with remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **water** if needed—it should pour easily in a thin stream and coat a spoon lightly. Gently stir in **salt** and **baking powder** just before cooking (do not overmix).
8. Heat a 10-12 inch non-stick skillet over medium heat until a drop of **water** dances on the surface. Very lightly oil the pan with **vegetable oil** for the first **injera** only.
9. Pour approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **batter** into the pan in a rapid spiral motion from outside edge to center, tilting pan to ensure even coverage. The entire pour should take *3-4 seconds*—speed is critical for uniform thickness.
10. Immediately cover with a tight-fitting lid. Cook for *60-90 seconds* without lifting lid. Surface should be completely dry with numerous small holes (aynet) covering the entire surface. Bottom should be lightly set but not browned.
11. Remove **injera** without flipping (it cooks on one side only) and place on clean kitchen towel to cool. Do not stack while hot.
12. Repeat with remaining **batter**, adjusting heat as needed. No additional oil should be necessary after the first **injera**.
13. Once cooled to room temperature, stack **injera** between layers of parchment paper or clean towels. Use immediately or store.

## Equipment Required

- Large non-reactive bowl (glass, ceramic, or stainless steel—minimum 3-quart capacity)
- Clean kitchen towel or cheesecloth for covering
- Wire whisk
- 10-12 inch non-stick skillet with tight-fitting lid (essential for steam)
- Ladle or measuring cup (½ cup capacity)
- Clean kitchen towels for cooling and storage
- Instant-read thermometer (for water temperature)
- Parchment paper for stacking

## Mise en Place

- Prepare chlorine-free **water** at least *24 hours* in advance if using tap water (let stand uncovered to allow chlorine to evaporate)
- Ensure fermentation location maintains *68-75°F*—cooler temperatures slow fermentation significantly
- Use room temperature ingredients for initial mixing
- Have **salt** and **baking powder** measured and ready to add on cooking day
- Test skillet with water drop before beginning to cook

## Ingredient Tips

- **Teff flour:** Use 100% whole grain teff for authentic flavor and texture. Brown teff produces more

robust flavor; white teff creates milder, lighter-colored **injera**. Store **teff flour** in refrigerator or freezer to prevent rancidity.

- Chlorine in tap water inhibits fermentation—use filtered water or let tap water stand uncovered for *24 hours*
- **Yeast** acts as fermentation starter to ensure reliable results; traditional methods rely solely on wild yeasts but are less predictable
- **Baking powder** added on cooking day provides additional lift and insurance for hole formation

## Fermentation Monitoring

- **Healthy fermentation:** Pleasant sour smell (lactic acid, yogurt-like), active bubbling, thin clear liquid on top, batter thins over time
- **CONTAMINATION SIGNS—DISCARD IF OBSERVED:**
  - Pink, orange, or red discoloration (bacterial contamination)
  - Fuzzy growth on surface (mold—white, green, black, or gray)
  - Putrid, rotten, or ammonia-like smell (spoilage bacteria)
  - Slimy or ropy texture when stirred (certain bacteria produce polysaccharides)
  - Complete separation with clear **water** on top and thick paste on bottom (failed fermentation)
- Stir batter *once daily* to redistribute microorganisms and prevent surface drying

- Temperature critical: below  $65^{\circ}\text{F}$  fermentation is very slow; above  $80^{\circ}\text{F}$  increases contamination risk
- If fermentation seems sluggish after *48 hours*, move to warmer location or extend fermentation time
- Cooked **injera** stores at room temperature for *2-3 days* wrapped in clean towel, then placed in plastic bag
- Refrigerate for up to *1 week*—layer with parchment paper and store in airtight container

## Preparation Tips

- Batter consistency is critical—too thick produces dense **injera** without holes; too thin creates fragile bread that tears
- Pour rapidly in continuous spiral motion—hesitation creates uneven thickness and poor hole distribution
- **Lid must fit tightly**—steam trapped under lid creates the characteristic holes. Without steam, surface remains flat
- First **injera** is often imperfect as pan temperature stabilizes—consider it a test piece
- Do not flip or cook second side—**injera** has distinct top (holey) and bottom (smooth) surfaces
- If holes fail to form: batter may need more fermentation time, **baking powder** may be old, or lid may not seal properly
- Adjust heat between batches—pan should be hot enough for immediate bubbling but not so hot that bottom burns before top sets
- Stack only when completely cool to prevent steaming and sogginess

## Make Ahead & Storage

- **Batter** can be refrigerated after fermentation for up to *24 hours*—bring to room temperature before cooking

## Serving Suggestions

- Traditionally used as both plate and utensil—tear pieces with right hand to scoop stews and sauces
- Pairs excellently with Ethiopian wot (spiced stews), Moroccan tagines, or any rich, sauce-based dish
- The sour notes complement fatty meats (lamb, beef) and cut through richness of cream-based sauces
- Spongy texture absorbs sauces while maintaining structural integrity for scooping
- Serve at room temperature—cold **injera** is less pliable
- For traditional presentation, line large platter with **injera**, arrange stews on top, and serve additional **injera** rolled on the side
- Leftover **injera** can be torn and mixed with scrambled eggs for Ethiopian firfir breakfast dish