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## Easy Sandwich Bread

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 15: Let's Make Bread

### WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

We knew that hastily made yeast breads can sometimes lack the structure necessary for a satisfactory rise, and their interiors are often coarse and craggy. Our goal was to make a soft, well-risen, even-crumbed loaf of bread without kneading or shaping, from start to finish in less than 2 hours.

To encourage maximum gluten structure, we used high-protein bread flour instead of all-purpose flour. We also reduced the fat and sugar slightly and withheld salt until the second mix, which gave our bread more spring and lift. Switching our mixer's dough hook for a paddle and increasing the speed to medium not only shortened our mixing time but also gave our dough enough structure to rise into a pleasing dome shape, which we highlighted with a shiny egg wash before baking and brushed with a thin coat of melted butter after.

### Makes 1 Loaf

The test kitchen's preferred loaf pan measures 8 1/2 by 4 1/2 inches; if using a 9 by 5-inch pan, check for doneness 5 minutes early. To prevent the loaf from deflating as it rises, do not let the batter come in contact with the plastic wrap. This loaf is best eaten the day it is made, but leftovers may be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored for up to two days at room temperature or frozen for up to one month.

### INGREDIENTS

- 2** cups (11 ounces) bread flour
- 6** tablespoons (2 ounces) whole-wheat flour
- 2 1/4** teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast
- 1 1/4** cups plus 2 tablespoons warm water (120 degrees)
- 3** tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1** tablespoon honey
- 3/4** teaspoon salt
- 1** large egg, lightly beaten with 1 teaspoon water and pinch salt

### INSTRUCTIONS

**1.** In bowl of stand mixer, whisk bread flour, whole-wheat flour, and yeast together. Add 1 1/4 cups warm water, 2 tablespoons melted butter, and honey. Fit stand mixer with paddle and mix on low speed for 1 minute. Increase speed to medium and mix for 2 minutes. Scrape down bowl and paddle with greased rubber spatula. Continue to mix 2 minutes longer. Remove bowl and paddle from mixer. Scrape down bowl and paddle, leaving paddle in batter. Cover with plastic wrap and let batter rise in warm place until doubled in size, about 20 minutes.

**2.** Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Spray 8 1/2 by 4 1/2-inch loaf pan with vegetable oil spray. Dissolve salt in remaining 2 tablespoons warm water. When batter has doubled, attach bowl and paddle to mixer. Add salt-water mixture and mix on low speed until water is mostly incorporated, about 40 seconds. Increase speed to medium and mix until thoroughly combined, about 1 minute, scraping down paddle if necessary. Transfer batter to prepared pan and smooth surface with greased rubber spatula. Cover and leave in warm place until

batter reaches ½ inch below edge of pan, 15 to 20 minutes. Uncover and let rise until center of batter is level with edge of pan, 5 to 10 minutes longer.

**3.** Gently brush top of risen loaf with egg mixture. Bake until deep golden brown and loaf registers 208 to 210 degrees, 40 to 45 minutes. Using dish towels, carefully invert bread onto wire rack. Reinvert loaf and brush top and sides with remaining 1 tablespoon melted butter. Let cool completely before slicing.

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## TECHNIQUE

### POURABLE DOUGH

The dough for this sandwich bread is so wet that it is actually more like a batter. After a brief first rise, you simply pour it straight from the mixer bowl into the loaf pan—you couldn't shape it even if you tried.



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## TECHNIQUE

### WHAT MAKES IT FASTER—AND EASIER?

The dough, or batter, for our bread is made with more than double the amount of yeast used in a typical sandwich bread, and it has 20 percent more water by weight. We also use the paddle attachment of our stand mixer instead of the dough hook employed for almost all other bread doughs.

#### MORE YEAST: WHY IT HELPS

Lots of yeast means a faster rise—20 minutes versus up to 2 hours for a standard loaf.



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#### HIGHER HYDRATION: WHY IT HELPS

More water in the dough (up to a point) enhances gluten structure without requiring as much kneading; it also results in pourable dough that doesn't need shaping.



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#### PADDLE ATTACHMENT: WHY IT HELPS

Using a paddle (more typically used to beat heavy cookie dough) instead of a dough hook allows for more aggressive, faster kneading.



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## TECHNIQUE

### FLAVOR FIX

One downside of cutting back on rising time is a sacrifice in flavor, since the trademark taste of a classic loaf develops as fermentation occurs during two slow rises. We compensate for this by adding butter and honey to the batter as well as a bit of nutty whole-wheat flour.

