

Dan Leader's 4-Hour Baguette

By Genius Recipes

This recipe is the aggressive, no-more-excuses shove that you need to start baking your own bread. It will only take you 4 hours of intermittent attention, and won't require a starter nor any equipment you don't already own -- and it will rival your favorite bakery's. Adapted slightly from [Local Breads](#) (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007) and [Savour Magazine](#).

Makes 3 baguettes

- 1 1/2 cup (12 ounces) tap water, heated to 115° F
 - 1 teaspoon (1/8 ounce) active dry yeast
 - 3 1/4 cups (14 2/3 ounces) all-purpose flour
 - 4 teaspoons (3/8 ounces) Diamond Crystal kosher salt
 - Canola oil, for greasing bowl
 - 1/2 cup ice cubes
1. Whisk together water and yeast in a large bowl; let sit until yeast is foamy, about 10 minutes. Add flour, and stir with a fork until dough forms and all flour is absorbed; let dough sit to allow flour to hydrate, about 20 minutes. Add salt, then transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface, and knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Transfer dough ball to a lightly greased bowl, cover bowl with plastic wrap, and place bowl in a cold oven or microwave. Let dough rest until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.
 2. Transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface, and shape into an 8-inch x 6-inch rectangle. Fold the 8-inch sides toward the middle, then fold the shorter sides toward the center, like a T-shirt. Return dough, seam side down, to the bowl. Cover with plastic again, and return to oven. Let sit until doubled in size, about 1 hour.
 3. Remove bowl with dough from oven, and place a cast-iron skillet on the bottom rack of oven; position another rack above skillet, and place a baking stone or upside down or rimless sheet pan on it.
 4. Heat oven to 475° F. Transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface, and cut into three equal pieces; shape each piece into a 14-inch rope. Flour a sheet of parchment paper on a rimless baking sheet; place ropes, evenly spaced, on paper. Lift paper between ropes to form pleats; place two tightly rolled kitchen towels under long edges of paper, creating supports for the loaves. Cover loosely with plastic wrap; let sit until it doubles in size, about 50 minutes.
 5. Uncover; remove towels, and flatten paper to space out loaves. Using a sharp razor, knife, bread lame, or scissors, slash the top of each baguette at a 30-degree angle in four spots; each slash should be about 4 inches long. Pull out the oven rack with the stone or baking sheet on it and, using the corner of the parchment paper as a guide, slide the loaves, still on the parchment paper, onto the baking stone or pan. Place ice cubes in skillet (this produces steam that lets the loaves rise fully before a crust forms). Bake the baguettes until darkly browned and crisp, 20 to 30 minutes; cool before serving.