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## Tante Marie's Cooking School

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### French Bread

1/2 cup hot water (110-115 degrees F)  
1 Tbs. dry active yeast  
1 tsp. sugar  
6 cups all-purpose flour  
1 1/2 Tbs. salt  
2 cups warm water  
oil  
1-2 Tbs. cornmeal

Warm a glass measuring cup by rinsing it in hot water. Stir the yeast and sugar into the hot water. Let rest 5-10 minutes, until bubbles appear on the surface.

Meanwhile, warm a large bowl, preferably ceramic, by rinsing it in hot water. Combine 5 cups of the flour and the salt in the bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in the warm water. When the yeast mixture has bubbled, pour this into the center of the bowl. Using a wooden spoon, mix the yeast with the warm water first before bringing in the flour. The dough should be quite sticky. Place it on a board and knead, adding up to 1 more cup flour, as necessary. The dough is properly kneaded when it is smooth and elastic.

Rinse out the ceramic bowl and dry it. Lightly oil the bowl and place the round of dough in it, turning so all the sides get slightly greased. Cover with a towel and set in a warm place, free of drafts, to rise until double in bulk. (approx. 1 hour)

Punch down dough and divide and shape into loaves. Place on baking sheets that have been sprinkled with cornmeal or use lightly greased banetones. Let rise again until double, about 1/2 hour or more.

With a very sharp knife or razor blade, make diagonal slashes in the top of the loaves. Place them in a preheated 425 degree oven that has a pan of water in it, or spray continually for the first 10 minutes of baking. After 10 minutes reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees. Bake for another 30 minutes. Cool on racks. Makes 8<sup>a</sup>10 baguettes. MSR

