

Homemade French Bread

serves 6-8

5-6 cups all-purpose or bread flour
5 teaspoons active dry yeast
2 teaspoons salt {sea salt is best}
2 cups warm water
1 TBS olive oil -or- 1 TBS butter, melted
1 TBS whole egg powder mixed with 2 TBS water – or- 1 egg white mixed with 1 TBS water

Tools and Supplies

spray bottle
perforated double french bread pan (nice to have but not required)

Instructions:

In a medium bowl, combine 2 cups flour, yeast and salt. Stir in 2 cups warm water, and melted butter or oil. Beat until well blended either by hand or using a stand mixer with a dough hook attachment. Stir in as much of the remaining flour as you can.

On a lightly floured surface, knead in enough flour to make a stiff dough that is smooth and elastic. Knead for about 8 to 10 minutes total. {Or knead in your mixer with the dough hook for 8 minutes on low-medium speed.} Shape into a ball. Place dough in a greased bowl, and turn once. Cover, and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 30 minutes to an hour.

Punch dough down, and divide in half. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Cover, and let rest for 10 minutes. Roll each half into large rectangle. Roll up, starting from a long side. Moisten edge with water and seal. Taper ends.

Grease a large baking sheet. Place loaves, seam side down, on the prepared baking sheet. With a very sharp knife, make 3 or 4 diagonal cuts about 1/4 inch deep across top of each loaf. Brush on egg mixture. Cover with a damp cloth. Let rise until nearly doubled, 35 to 40 minutes.

Bake in a preheated 375° F oven for 20 minutes. Brush again with egg mixture. Bake for an additional 15 to 20 minutes, or until bread tests done. If necessary, cover loosely with foil to prevent over browning. Remove from baking sheet, and cool on a wire rack.