

10in10Diet.com Making Bread

Equipment:

- Large heavy ceramic or glass bowl
- Thermometer (from the yogurt-maker) optional
- Two 4"x9" loaf pans
- Electric beaters
- Wooden spoon
- Large cutting board

Ingredients:

- 2 cups hard unbleached flour
- 6 cups whole wheat flour (hard red spring wheat is best)
- 4 teaspoons traditional dry yeast (NOT bread machine yeast, it's special fast-acting yeast and will give out too soon)
- 1 tsp honey
- 2 3/4 cups milk (or water plus 2/3 cup skim milk powder)
- 2 tsp salt
- 3/8 cup butter
- 1/4 cup molasses

Begin:

- Heat the teaspoon of honey in a small pot, then add the water/milk and heat to 85 degrees Fahrenheit (30 degrees C.)
- Put the bay's-bath-warm water in the big bowl.
- Sprinkle the yeast over it and wait no more than 10 minutes.

While waiting:

- Measure the flour into separate containers
- Melt the butter and mix the molasses into it

Mixing:

- When the 10 minutes are up, and the yeast is busy making a beige scum on the water, mix together the molasses, melted butter, and salt, then mix into the milk mixture.
- Drop in the unbleached flour and one cup of the whole wheat. Beat for exactly two minutes with the electric beaters. This gets the gluten worked up. You can mix it with a spoon 200 times, but it's not quite the same.
- Add another cup of whole wheat flour and beat briefly.
- Use the wooden spoon to mix in more flour. When it's just barely manageable, turn it out onto a well-floured board.

Kneading:

- Wash your hands and the bowl, dry it and grease the bowl with butter. Put it aside.
- Knead the dough for a full twenty minutes. This means use the heels of your hands to push the dough away and pull it back, until the dough is a long tube. Then pick it up, letting it stretch down and whip it into a knot. Repeat, adding flour to the board just enough to keep it from sticking. It's better not to use up all the flour than to make the dough too dry. The dough will be smooth and elastic. You might have half a cup of so of the whole wheat flour left.

Rising:

- Make a ball and roll it around in the buttered bowl so it's all greased. Cover the bowl with a tea towel. Pre-heat the oven for thirty seconds and turn it off. Leave the oven light on throughout the risings.
- Place the covered bowl in the oven for an hour on a hot day, longer in winter. You want the dough to have doubled in size. It's warm and smells great and feels alive!
- Punch the dough down, make a ball again. Put it in the oven for half as long as it took to double the first time, check to see that it's doubled in size.
- Grease the loaf pans with shortening or butter (oil soaks in too much).
- When the dough has doubled again, cut the dough in half.

Forming the loaves:

- Tuck the dough under to make a nice rounded top on each loaf
- With the sides of your hands, flatten the ends as if sealing them off and fold the flat bits up, giving your loaf four corners.
- Put the loaves seams down in the pans. Cover them with the towel and the dough as long as the second rising took. Watch it carefully because if the loaves get too puffy they'll hang over the sides and fall in the middle. They should just barely double. They'll rise a bit more while the oven is pre-heating.

Baking:

- Take the loaves out and pre-heat the oven to 350.
- Bake 35 minutes. Tapping the bottom of a loaf will sound hollow.
- Cool before slicing.