

BASIC WHITE BREAD

This recipe makes about 16 rolls

450g/1 lb or about 4 cups strong white flour

½ teaspoon salt

(12g) fresh yeast or (6g) active dried yeast or instant yeast

4 tablespoons warm water

4 tablespoons/¼ cup rapeseed or olive oil

275ml/1 cup warm water

pinch of sugar

METHOD

1. Place the flour and salt in a large mixing bowl.
2. If using fresh or active yeast, sprinkle the yeast and the sugar over the 4 tablespoons of warm water and allow to stand until the yeast is dissolved. If time, leave to stand in a warm place until the mixture begins to froth. (If using the instant yeast, omit this stage and mix the yeast with the flour and sugar, adding the all the water and oil in one go as below)
3. Pour the yeast mixture, oil and warm water into the flour and salt. Mix all together until a dough is formed. The texture of the dough should be like 'play dough'
If using a food processor, blend together for 45 seconds with metal blade.
4. Using a floured surface, knead the dough until it becomes smooth and pliable. If it is too sticky, simply add a little flour to it until it becomes firm. If too firm, add a little more water.

5. Continue to knead until the dough is elastic and smooth.
6. Place the ball of dough in an oiled bowl. Cover with a damp tea towel or plastic film and leave to stand in a warm place until it has risen to double its original volume.
7. Grease a baking sheet for rolls or 1 lb loaf tin for bread. Tin can be floured too if desired to make removal of bread easier.
8. When the mixture has doubled in volume, knock it down.
9. Then shape it into rolls or loaf. To make shaping easier, keep hands a little oily.
10. Again cover with a tea towel or cling film and leave to stand in a warm place until doubled in volume again. The bread will look beautifully 'puffy' at this stage.
11. If desired, glaze the top with egg yolk mixed with salt and a small amount of water, and sprinkle on any desired topping eg sesame or poppy seeds or sea salt and slash with sharp knife if desired.
12. Bake in oven 200°C/400°F for about 15 minutes for rolls. The rolls should be golden brown. A loaf should be baked for about 40 - 45 minutes.
13. Check that the bread is cooked by tapping on the bottom. It should sound hollow.
14. Place rolls or bread on cooling rack - if left in tin it will sweat. Do not place in sealed container for storage until completely cooled.