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Italian
Bread

Homemade Italian Bread: Simple & Delicious 🍞

Nothing beats the taste of **homemade Italian bread**—the **chewy crust, the pillowy soft interior, and the incredible aroma** filling your kitchen. This recipe is **easy to make with minimal effort** but delivers a **fantastic, bakery-quality result**. This recipe can be doubled.

Ready to bake? Let's get started! 🍞🔥

Ingredients (*Serves 4-6*)

- **215g bread flour**
- **4g kosher or sea salt**
- **175g warm water**
(*about 100–110°F / 38–43°C*)
- **1 tsp instant dry yeast**
- **1 tsp olive oil**
- **cornmeal for dusting pan**

Mixing Instructions

1. In the **bowl of a stand mixer**, combine **bread flour, salt, and yeast**.
2. Attach the **paddle attachment** and mix on **low speed for 10 seconds** to incorporate the dry ingredients.
3. Add **warm water** and mix until the ingredients are just combined.
4. Switch to the **dough hook attachment** and mix on **low speed** for about **2 minutes**, until the dough **grabs onto the hook and pulls away from the sides of the bowl**.
 - **Do not overmix.**
 - If the dough **sticks too much to the bowl** and won't attach to the dough hook, sprinkle in **a small amount of flour**.
5. Wet your hands, remove the dough from the bowl, and gently shape it into a **ball**.

6. Add a **light coating of olive oil** to the bowl, then place the dough back inside.
7. **Cover tightly** with plastic wrap and let the dough **rise for 2–3 hours**, or until it **doubles in size**.

Cooking Instructions

1. **Prepare the Dough:**
 - Wet your hands and gently remove the **risen dough** from the bowl.
 - Form it into a **ball** and place it on a **lightly floured surface**. *(No need to cover the dough.)*
2. **Create Steam for a Crispy Crust:**
 - Fill an **oven-safe bowl** with **16 ounces of water** and place it on the **bottom rack** of your oven. *(This will create steam and help develop a crispy crust.)*
3. **Preheat the Oven:**
 - Place a **sheet pan or pizza stone** in the oven.
 - Preheat the oven to **450°F** for **45 minutes**.
4. **Prepare for Baking:**
 - Once the oven is fully preheated, sprinkle some **cornmeal** on the **sheet pan or pizza stone** to prevent sticking.
 - Score the top of the dough in an **X pattern** using a **razor blade or sharp knife**.
5. **Bake the Bread:**
 - Carefully place the **scored dough** onto the **preheated sheet pan or pizza stone**, scored side up.
 - Bake for **25–30 minutes**, or until the **internal temperature** of the bread reaches **200–225°F** and crust is golden brown.
6. **Cool the Bread:**
 - Remove the bread from the oven and place it on a **wire rack** to cool.

Notes & Tips

- **No-Knead Method:** This recipe requires **no kneading**, resulting in a **light, airy loaf** with plenty of beautiful holes inside.

- **Handle with Care:** Avoid **overworking the dough** at any stage, as this can lead to a **dense, tough loaf** instead of a soft, open crumb.

Flavor Variations

- **Herb-Infused Bread:** Add **1 tsp oregano** and **1 tsp basil** to the dry ingredients for a subtle, aromatic twist.
- **Garlic Bread Upgrade:**
 - Stir in **1 tbsp granulated garlic** OR
 - Add **1½ tbsp finely chopped fresh garlic** for an **unbelievable homemade garlic bread**.