

Recipe

Iron Skillet Soda Bread with Caraway Seeds

Ingredients

2 & 1/2 cups all- purpose flour

1 cup whole wheat flour

1/2 cup wheat germ

1/4 cup granulated sugar

1 Tbl. whole caraway seeds

1 & 1/2 tsp. salt

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. baking powder

2 Tbl. melted butter

1 & 3/4 cups buttermilk

3 Tbl. additional melted butter (later for brushing the loaf)

Directions

- Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
- Lightly flour a work surface for forming the dough (either a clean counter space or large cutting board will suffice.)
- Grease a 9 to 12- inch iron skillet (If not available, place two cookie sheets atop one another and line the top one with parchment.)
- Mix both flours, wheat germ, sugar, caraway, salt, baking soda and baking powder together in a large mixing bowl with a wire whisk until well blended.



- Combine the buttermilk and 2 Tbl. of melted butter in a separate small mixing bowl with a fork. (It's fine for there to be tiny pieces of coagulated butter floating in the buttermilk. In fact, this is good.)
- Create a small, hollowed bowl shape in the flour mixture with your hands and pour the buttermilk/butter mixture into the hollowed area.
- With a rubber spatula mix the liquid into the dry ingredients until they just come together (*do not overwork*)
- Pull the dough together and transfer it onto the floured work surface.
- Knead the dough only 3 passes. Though the tendency is to knead the dough further, do not exceed 3 kneads, as this will toughen the dough and ultimately the bread.
- Form the dough into a 7 round (about 2 & 1/2 inches in height)
- With a serrated knife make two release cuts into the dough in the shape of a cross, 1/4 inch deep from one side to the other. (This allows for moisture to escape and for the loaf to rise nicely while baking.)
- Transfer the loaf onto the greased iron skillet.
- Bake on the upper-middle rack at 375 degrees or until lightly toasty brown and a toothpick inserted come out clean (approximately 35-40 minutes)
- Remove from the oven and transfer the loaf from the pan to a wire cooling rack.
- While the Soda Bread is still hot, bush the entire crust generously with the remaining melted butter.
- Allow to cool 30 minutes before serving.



Chef's Notes:

This recipe is considered to be a quick-bread and requires no rising time. It is a traditional rustic Irish loaf that is great served warm and slathered with butter. The method of using both soda and baking powders helps to make this loaf a little lighter and less “soapy” in flavor, but it has a great hearty crust that eats a bit like a scone. The iron skillet helps as a fool-proof method for a perfectly toasted bottom crust. We use part all-purpose flour and part whole wheat with the wheat germ added back into the flour for a great rustic flavor. When the loaf is still hot, we brush it generously with melted butter to soften the crust some.

