

4-Hour No-Knead bread.

by [daniel_reetz](#) on April 23, 2009

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intro: 4-Hour No-Knead bread.

There are many good bread Instructables already, but when making bread, you can never have too many fail-safe techniques, and this recipe works almost every time.

This is a four-hour process; you need that much time to let the dough rise. I like to throw it together while snacking on lunch, and then when I get home after school it is ready to throw in the oven.

My recipe differs from most no-knead recipes in that you do not drop it into a heated pan. I changed the recipe because I had too many burns from handling a bread pan at 400+ degrees, and one of my Pyrex dishes shattered on me when I accidentally set the edge of it on a wet washcloth.

I hope you enjoy this tutorial and the resulting mouthwatering delicious bread.



Image Notes

1. LOAF!!

step 1: Materials.

Flour:

To make good bread, you need good flour. Flour which is marked "bread flour" typically has 11-12% protein (gluten) which is higher than normal flour. This allows the loaf to have good structure and texture. You can cut cheaper white flour with bread flour if you don't have enough of either.

Yeast:

I use yeast from a Polish market. While you can buy Fleischmann's yeast from the supermarket, it is really expensive, especially in packets. If you have access to an Eastern European or Balkan market, often they sell 1lb bags of yeast for just a few dollars, a huge savings over the grocery store stuff. You need a small spoonful, the amount is not critical.

Salt:

I use sea salt, but you can use any kind of salt. Salt adds flavor and slows the growth of yeast slightly. I like to put about half a spoonful in.

Container:

You need a bake-proof container with a lid (the lid saves you from having to use foil every time and results in a more consistent crust). I got my Pyrex baking dish (visible in Step 7) at a local thrift store for just a few dollars. It is really the perfect dish for this kind of thing

Ingredients:

3 cups flour.

Some salt. (see picture 2)

Some yeast. (see picture 2)



Image Notes

1. the magic of Photoshop

step 2: Putting Things Together and Mixing Them.

Pour your ingredients in a bowl. Mix the dry ingredients a bit before adding 1.5 cups warm(ish) water.

Be sure to add the water slowly - pour it in a small but steady stream. Some flours take more or less. You just want your dough to be "shaggy" -- pictured in the next step.



step 3: Making Your Dough "Shaggy".

Your dough should be this consistency or a little more damp. It's easy to add too much water -- it's better to add less, because when you let it sit for 4 hours, the water will diffuse through the loaf.

If you added too much, add more flour to get it back to "shaggy", my favorite texture.



step 4: I Love Yeast

Cover the dough, put it in a warm place, and let the yeast rise. It's pretty amazing to watch them go.

These images cover a span of about 4 hours. You can do more, but you'll get poor results with less.



Image Notes

1. you can see the damp cutting board drying!

step 5:

This part is critical. I have an old burnt pan that I use for just this purpose.

Put a tablespoon or so of oil on the surface.

Let the oil spread around.

Remove the dough from your mixing bowl. Mash it once as shown. Do not mash or knead it any more than once or, if you must, two times.

Roll up the flat thing you just made.

Done with this step!



step 6: Into the Dish!

Place the dough in a Pyrex baking dish, "ugly side up". Doing this allows the dough to easily expand and makes for an interesting surface.

I like to salt my bread at this point. The surface is oily and catches the salt nicely. Be generous with the salt; you won't regret it.

Other things I like to put on top:

A dash of sugar and black pepper OR

A streak of honey (if I plan to eat it with butter/jam) OR

Basil and sun dried tomato pieces OR

A splash of garlic vinegar OR

Minced onion.



step 7: Pre-Oven Prep

Now cover the loaf in the baking pan. You have to let it "rest" in order to have it bake properly. By now, you're probably starving, but don't rush this step.

To make the wait easier, preheat your oven to around 450 degrees F.



Image Notes
1. after resting

step 8: INTO THE DARKNESS

Put your dough in the oven.

Pour some water on your hands for your dead yeasties.



Image Notes
1. the darkness

step 9: Baking

Bake your bread for 30 minutes with the cover on.

Then, if you want an extra crispy, nutty, amazing crust, remove the lid and bake 5 more minutes.



Image Notes
1. i meant to point at this...

step 10: ENJOY.

By now, your whole house smells of baking and you're starving. Take the loaf from the oven, remove it from the pan, and let it cool for a minute. Cut it with a bread knife or tear it open with your hands like a hungry caveman.

One of the simplest and most delicious things to eat with the finished product is a small bowl with oil, salt, and Italian spices like basil. I like to keep such a bowl in my fridge, ready for each new loaf. Dipping fresh bread in such a mixture is just outstanding eating.

I won't even go into the money you'll save baking for yourself, because if you could buy this kind of bread at the store, you wouldn't care what it cost.



Image Notes

1. LOAF!!

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Comments

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stryke says:

Apr 27, 2009. 2:06 PM [REPLY](#)

I just tried your recipe - it worked out great! I'm from Germany and don't know which flour to take, the best I got had approx 11% protein, so the whole thing got really little pores...

I covered it with honey and a bit of pepper, it's kind of old-italian and very tasty, fits great to some salted meat...



t.rohner says:

Apr 28, 2009. 11:26 PM [REPLY](#)

Hi, i would suggest you take type 550 flour. That's what i take for white bread.



stryke says:

Apr 29, 2009. 5:43 AM [REPLY](#)

Thanks - that's exactly what I use.



daniel_reetz says:
Is that something that's listed on the package?

Apr 29, 2009. 9:16 AM [REPLY](#)



stryke says:
In Germany, this specific flour is called wheat type 550, dunno what this number means, but it defines it's compound. type 550 has got approx 11% of protein. type 405 is most common I suppose and got approx 9%. And yes, it's listed on the package.

Apr 29, 2009. 10:37 AM [REPLY](#)

I just made another one with salt and basil but it was *that* tasty it didn't even last long enough to be photographed...



daniel_reetz says:
Absolutely beautiful pictures.

Apr 27, 2009. 4:00 PM [REPLY](#)

I think your flour is fine -- 11% is OK. In the past, I have cheated and used plain white flour and still gotten OK results (though not great). I'm not sure what to suggest about the pores -- it might be as simple as your baking dish being a little small?

I love the honey and pepper combo. I'll have to try it with some dry sausage or prosciutto... Thanks for reporting back!



t.rohner says:
Looks very good, i do it a little different, but with very good results.

Apr 24, 2009. 4:33 AM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:
Wow, that looks incredible. Those cuts are just beautiful. Are those from your Spent Grain instructable? I'll have to follow your method. I haven't yet been able to get longer loaves to cook as smoothly as the ball-shaped one above.

Apr 24, 2009. 8:35 AM [REPLY](#)



t.rohner says:
The pics are partly from the spent grain instructable and partly from my upcoming "Ultimate bread" instructable. Only the slashed loaves are spent grain breads. The other loaves are my so called "flow bread". A extremely wet dough, used for rolls around here. (St. Galler Buerli)
I have to form those loaves or rolls by dipping my hands into cold water to prevent the dough from sticking. You also have to handle the dough very gently, since you don't want to degas it too much. You have to work quickly as well, since it would flow wide, as long as it's not in a very hot oven. (570F)
This way you get this incredible oven spring.
In my upcoming instructable, i will show a less wet dough. It's easier to handle and you can easily adjust the pore size you like. I also showed it with partly whole wheat flour in a workshop i gave.

Apr 28, 2009. 11:47 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:
Seriously looking forward to your new Instructable!

Apr 29, 2009. 9:17 AM [REPLY](#)



Culturedropout says:
Gotta love homemade bread! I use a similar recipe, but I let mine sit all day (or sometimes over night) the first time. It develops a really good "sourdough" flavor. I picked up a bunch of different types of flour; barley, rye, whole-wheat, seven grain, oat, etc. and have been experimenting with various combinations. I also tried throwing in things like nutritional yeast, sunflower seeds, and leftover oatmeal. All of these were very tasty. Also, try sprinkling a bunch of sesame seeds on top before you put it in the oven. Be generous, because they spread out when the loaf expands. Mmm... toasted sesame seeds happen when it bakes. I've successfully used the insert and lid from a crock pot as a "Dutch oven" (although you can buy actual Dutch ovens as well). I just put the dough in the pot and put the lid on, and put the whole thing in the oven before the pre-heating starts. I've also had good luck just throwing the dough on a pizza stone that was pre-heated along with the oven; I dump a cup or so of hot water into a shallow baking dish and put that on the shelf below the pizza stone, to

Apr 25, 2009. 5:17 PM [REPLY](#)

provide humidity while it bakes. Thanks for a very good Instructable. I love bread!



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 25, 2009. 5:39 PM [REPLY](#)

Wow, copious great tips. I'm going to try some of these, and if you don't mind (and they work out) add them to the Instructable.

Does your yeast still rise after a whole day of sitting? I had troubles when I'd forget it..the dough would take on a "fermenty" smell and the yeast seemed kinda dead... any tips there?



Ninzerbean says:

Apr 29, 2009. 5:34 AM [REPLY](#)

This is weird but true - the LESS yeast you use the longer you can let your bread sit around to rise, another great benefit is that the less yeast you use the longer it takes for your bread to go stale. 1/4 tsp for your 'ible would be fine. Also, never put finished bread in the fridge or it will get stale - always put it in the freezer. The dough can go in the fridge to prolong the rising time or alter the time and it won't hurt the process.



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 29, 2009. 9:16 AM [REPLY](#)

Very interesting. I guess it makes sense, right? Less yeast means that it takes longer to rise, because there are less organisms at work. Thanks.



clark says:

Apr 26, 2009. 10:48 PM [REPLY](#)

an animated gif of step 4 would look really neat. btw, great instructable! :D



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 27, 2009. 4:49 AM [REPLY](#)

Great idea. I'll throw one together and add it...



GibbonsRock says:

Apr 25, 2009. 11:33 AM [REPLY](#)

Hi! I am (attempting) to make this right now, and from 3 cups flour and 1.5 cups water, I've got pancake batter! Maybe it's cuz' I'm using regular all purpose flour? does it take a while to get "shaggy"? I'll add some more flour...

thanks for the fun instructable!



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 25, 2009. 1:12 PM [REPLY](#)

Yikes! At least with my flour, I definitely don't have pancake batter. I think you have the right idea to add more water.

For anyone else trying this, just add water until it is "shaggy" and then stop -- I suppose different flours may give different results.

I may change the instructable to reflect this.



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 26, 2009. 5:55 AM [REPLY](#)

When I said more water, of course I meant: more flour.



daniel_reetz says:

Apr 26, 2009. 5:58 AM [REPLY](#)

And I updated step 2. Thanks for the feedback,GR.



GibbonsRock says:

Apr 26, 2009. 8:49 AM [REPLY](#)

Hi Dan!

Thanks for the update! I was literally typing one handed yesterday, my other hand dripping with pancake dough. My dough got a lot better with considerably more flour (I'd say over a cup extra!) but it never did quite make it to the shaggy stage. Anyhoo, I let it rise out on the deck for several hours, refrigerated overnight (duh'oh! had plans!)

I just baked it and it came out very good- with your bread being the "great" mark. :)

Now my wife and I are about to enjoy a mediterranean lunch of Brie, homemade pesto, a glass of wine and a loaf of "4 hour no knead bread."

Here's a pic for ya and your readers.

Thanks again!



daniel_reetz says:

That looks excellent, much better than my first try. Super cool to see the outcome! Thanks for your experience and info!

Apr 26, 2009. 10:53 AM [REPLY](#)



catwomanreading says:

Looks like you need three hands to make this bread. I'll have to borrow a cat paw!! Can't wait to try this - thanks for sharing!

Apr 25, 2009. 11:21 AM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Please let me know how it turns out using only two hands!

Apr 26, 2009. 5:58 AM [REPLY](#)



brianfss says:

This Instructable is what the site is all about. Simple, easy to make, good result but you can tell the author is not a pro baker. Great job!! Also, I'm going to try this but I have a big cast iron dutch oven with lid that I'm going to use. I'll pre-heat it and see how it goes.

Apr 25, 2009. 6:05 PM [REPLY](#)



LionessQB says:

Can you bake this in a bread machine?

Apr 25, 2009. 11:01 AM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Nope, you have to use the dish+oven technique. :(

Apr 25, 2009. 1:10 PM [REPLY](#)



LionessQB says:

Well, it's Super Cool anyway! It sounds GREAT! THANK!

Apr 25, 2009. 4:32 PM [REPLY](#)



Dorkfish92 says:

Awesome lble. I'll be making this soon. I wonder if it will taste good with bacon salt....

Apr 24, 2009. 4:41 PM [REPLY](#)



kenny94 says:

Or make a sammich with it, using baconnaisse! :D

Apr 24, 2009. 8:52 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

BACON!!!!

Apr 25, 2009. 3:06 AM [REPLY](#)



kenny94 says:

juo??q

Apr 25, 2009. 3:25 PM [REPLY](#)



omnisty says:

Have you tried adding cheese or garlic to this recipe?

Apr 24, 2009. 2:38 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Garlic seems to kill the yeast if you mix it in, but it's great on the crust. Haven't tried cheese except on the baked result.

It's possible to substitute milk for some of the water, but I can't really tell a difference in taste.

Apr 24, 2009. 3:15 PM [REPLY](#)



thepelton says:

Focaccia bread has cheese mixed in. It should work out fine.

Apr 25, 2009. 11:35 AM [REPLY](#)



zhenia says:

Dan,
this bread looks amazing! Will it work if I use whole wheat flour? And have you ever incorporated whole grains? Any tips would be appreciated.
Thanks

Apr 24, 2009. 10:38 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

I can't get it to work using entirely whole grain flour. I think the reason is that the gluten in wheat flour is not as readily available as it is in white flour... but there are good ways to incorporate it.

The simplest way is just to substitute 1/3 to 2/3C wheat flour for some of the white flour. I have also tried this with rye flour and it adds a nutty, dark flavor to the bread that it is irresistible.

You can also use whole wheat flour or ground grain mixes (I also use miller's bran) on your hands and in the baking bowl to keep the loaf from sticking. That makes for a great crust. It will also transfer easily from your hands to the oiled surface of the dough.

Let me know how yours turn out!

Apr 25, 2009. 3:11 AM [REPLY](#)



ElectricMonk says:

Great Instructable/recipe, the bread looks delicious! I bake my own bread a lot, but yours looks better than mine usually turns out, and there's a few tips in here I plan on trying.

Did I miss it where you said how much flour to use?

Apr 24, 2009. 7:08 AM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Step 1, picture 2 has it. I'll edit it so that it's in the text, too. Sorry!

Apr 24, 2009. 8:39 AM [REPLY](#)



misformiche says:

have you found a new bread pan? my eyes are still hunting for you.

i found a glass one (possibly pyrex) the edges are yellowish.
but its shaped like a regular bread pan,

Apr 24, 2009. 4:50 AM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Thanks, Miche.

I haven't found one yet. :(I have been using one of my pots with the handle removed. Pyrex or Fire King would be the best. I like this shape the most -- I can keep using my pan until one shows up.

Apr 24, 2009. 5:11 AM [REPLY](#)



code_e says:

Ya know, if you make this into rolls instead of bread, it will:

- 1) Reduce baking time (to about 15 min).
- 2) Provide faster gratification (see item #1 above).
- 3) Eliminate broken glassware (use a cookie sheet, or some foil instead).
- 4) Create more of that wonderful crust.
- 5) Allow you to season each mini-loaf individually.

Mmmmmmm..... :)

Good instructable and nice, simple recipe. I'll have to try it.

Apr 23, 2009. 6:15 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

I'll have to give it a shot. As I understand it, the crust texture is dependent on the trapped steam during baking, so it might change things to make rolls. But I'm into change! Thanks.

Apr 23, 2009. 6:59 PM [REPLY](#)



jessyratfink says:

How do you have three hands? Not fair!

This seems quite promising though. I'll have to give it a shot. :)

Apr 23, 2009. 6:27 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Sometimes I think I love Photoshop even more than bread.

Good luck to you!

Apr 23, 2009. 6:58 PM [REPLY](#)



Dandeman321 says:

GREAT instructable. I make my own pizza dough and pizzas and I would always pay double the price of a store bought one. I'll have to give this a try, nice and simple. Thanks for sharing! 5 Stars.

Apr 23, 2009. 10:26 AM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Thank you! Let me know if you have good results -- It would be cool to put pictures of someone else's creations at the last step.

Thanks for the comment.

Apr 23, 2009. 11:52 AM [REPLY](#)



Dandeman321 says:

Sure! I'll have to see if I can get around to it before I have to move out of my apt. I have to change housing arrangements at college for the summer and I don't have a kitchen I could use in the dorms :/

Apr 23, 2009. 12:18 PM [REPLY](#)



daniel_reetz says:

Bummer! The big thing for me was finding the Pyrex dish... the rest is cake. Good luck with your living situation.

Apr 23, 2009. 12:27 PM [REPLY](#)



Dandeman321 says:

I think I may have something that may work... Thanks! I'll keep you posted if I end up making it!

Apr 23, 2009. 1:49 PM [REPLY](#)

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