

## The History of Bread

Bread has been called the staff of life. Every culture around the world has its bread, made from native flours, which have sustained its peoples for centuries. The earliest evidence of bread making has been found in paleolithic archaeological sites. Rituals regarding the eating and use of bread have been created as well around the world and are in use still today. Families "break bread" to give thanks, to welcome guests, and to begin a meal. People are served bread at the beginning of a meal even today for this reason.

## Instructions and Recipe by Sally McKenny

### This No Yeast Bread Is:

- *Ready in 1 hour*
- *Made with 6 ingredients*
- *Convenient if you do not have or do not want to use yeast*
- *Dense, satisfying, and crusty*
- *Delicious toasted or warm with honey butter*
- *Made with buttermilk for extra flavor and richness*
- *Wonderful plain or with optional flavors*



## These Ingredients Are Crucial

This section is important to review if you are wondering about ingredient substitutions or why certain ingredients are used.

1. **All-Purpose Flour:** All-purpose flour is best for this loaf, though the same amount of bread flour may also be used without any changes to the recipe.
2. **Salt:** I use 1 and 1/2 teaspoons of fine sea salt for flavor but have also tested this recipe with the same amount of regular table salt. Both are excellent.
3. **Baking Soda:** This is a quick bread, so the bread rises without the use of yeast. Baking soda is our leavening agent. **Do not use baking powder** – you will need an excessive amount for this bread to rise and that much baking powder will leave a chemical aftertaste.
4. **Honey or Sugar:** Either work with zero changes to the recipe required.
5. **Buttermilk:** Buttermilk, an acidic ingredient, adds richness, flavor, and aids in the loaf's rise. If you do not have buttermilk, see my recipe note about a DIY version.
6. A sprinkle of oats, seasonings, and/or coarse salt on top is optional!

## Overview: How to Make No Yeast Bread

1. Combine the dry ingredients.
2. Mix the honey and melted butter, then stir into the dry ingredients.
3. In 2-3 additions, fold in the buttermilk to create a shaggy and slightly moist dough.

4. Turn dough and any flour crumbs at the bottom of the bowl onto a work surface. Using your hands, bring the dough together into a ball then flatten into a 2-inch-thick, 7-8-inch disc. These measurements do not need to be totally accurate.
5. Place onto a lined baking sheet or your baking pan of choice. (See next section.) Brush with a little more buttermilk and, if desired, sprinkle with some oats and/or coarse salt.
6. Using a very sharp knife, score the top of the dough with an X that is about 3/4 inch deep. This allows the center to bake.
7. Bake until golden brown. Tent with aluminum foil halfway through baking to prevent the crust from over-browning before the center cooks through.

## Best Baking Pan to Use for No Yeast Bread

- I usually use a half baking sheet lined with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
- You can also use a seasoned 10-12-inch cast iron skillet– feel free to pre-heat the skillet in the pre-heating oven, though that is not necessary.
- A dutch oven large enough to fit the loaf. Line with parchment paper before placing the dough inside. Feel free to bake the bread with the lid on, which helps develop a crispier crust. Remove the lid for the last 10 minutes of baking. The bake time may be longer since the bread is in a closed pan for most of the oven time.
- Any square or rectangular pan large enough to fit an 8-inch round loaf.

## Ingredients

- 4 and 1/4 cups (515g) **all-purpose flour** (spoon & leveled) plus more for hands and surface
- 1 and 1/2 teaspoons **salt**
- 1 and 1/2 teaspoons **baking soda**
- 4 Tablespoons (1/4 cup; 60g) **unsalted butter**, melted
- 2 Tablespoons **honey** (40g) or **granulated sugar** (25g)
- 1 and 3/4 cups (420ml) **buttermilk**, plus 1 Tablespoon for brushing the dough
- **optional:** 1 Tablespoon whole oats and/or a sprinkle of coarse salt for topping

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (204°C). There are options for the baking pan. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat, use a seasoned 10-12-inch cast iron skillet or grease a 9-10-inch cake pan or pie dish. Set aside. Feel free to pre-heat the skillet in the oven too, though that is not necessary.
2. Whisk the flour, salt, and baking soda together in a large bowl. Set aside.
3. Whisk the melted butter and honey/sugar together. Pour into the flour mixture and toss to combine. (The mixture will not fully combine yet since there's so little wet ingredients and so much flour.) In 2-3 additions, pour in the buttermilk mixing for 15-20 seconds after each addition. After all the buttermilk has been added, mix gently to form a shaggy, stiff, and slightly moist dough. If you used honey, there could be little specks of honey/butter in spots. That is ok! Those will be extra flavorful specks in your bread.
4. Pour the shaggy dough and any flour crumbs that have not been incorporated onto a lightly floured work surface. With floured hands, work the dough into a ball and flatten into a (approximately) 7-8-inch disc as best you can (make it about 2 inches tall). If the dough is too sticky, add a little more flour.

5. Transfer the disc to the prepared skillet/pan. Brush the whole loaf with 1 Tablespoon buttermilk. Using a very sharp knife, score a 3/4-inch-deep X into the top. (Without scoring, the bread cannot bake properly in the center.) Sprinkle optional oats and/or coarse salt on top of the loaf.
6. Bake until the bread is golden brown and center appears cooked through, about 45 minutes. Loosely cover the bread with aluminum foil halfway through bake time to protect the crust from over-browning before the center has a chance to cook.
7. Remove from the oven and allow bread to cool for 5 minutes before slicing. For best taste, though, let the bread cool for at least 30 minutes before slicing and serving. If you made a plain loaf, the slices are delicious spread with honey butter or your desired spreads. Slices taste wonderful toasted, too!
8. Cover and store bread at room temperature for 3 days or in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

## Notes

1. **Freezing Instructions:** Baked and cooled bread freezes well up to 3 months. Freeze the whole loaf or individual slices. Thaw in the refrigerator or at room temperature, then reheat as desired.
2. **Buttermilk:** Using cold buttermilk is best. Buttermilk is key to the bread's flavor, texture, and rise. The bread will not rise without it. If you do not have any buttermilk on hand, you can make a homemade "DIY" version. Whole milk or 2% milk is best, though lower fat or nondairy milks work in a pinch. Add 1 Tablespoon of lemon juice or white vinegar to a liquid measuring cup. Add enough milk to make 1 and 3/4 cup. Whisk together, then let sit for 5 minutes before using in the recipe.
3. **Alternative Flours:** Instead of all-purpose flour, you can use the same amount of bread flour with no other changes needed to the recipe. If you would like to use all whole wheat flour instead of all-purpose flour, expect an extremely dense and heavy loaf. Instead, I recommend using half all-purpose flour and half whole wheat flour. Still, the bread will taste heavy.
4. **Optional Flavor Additions:** Feel free to add flavor to this bread by mixing any of the following or a combination of them in with the flour in step 2: 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary or other chopped fresh herb, 1 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese or other shredded cheese, 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, 1 diced jalapeño, 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning or other ground seasoning/herb, 2 cloves minced garlic, or 1 cup dried cranberries, raisins, or other small dried fruit. Sometimes I add 1 extra Tablespoon of sugar/honey, 1 cup raisins, and 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon.
5. **Best Baking Pan to Use:** I like using a regular sheet pan because it is easy, convenient, and universal to most kitchens. I do not recommend a loaf pan because the loaf may not bake evenly inside. This dough is best as a flatter loaf. See blog post above for different pans.