Polish rye bread
Makes 1 large loaf (about 1 3/4 pounds)

150 g rye flour (1 1/4 cups)
150 g whole wheat flour (1 1/4 cups)
175 g bread or all-purpose flour (1 1/3 cups)
1/2 teaspoon instant yeast
2 tablespoons caraway seeds
2 tablespoons flax seeds
2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 1/3 cups water
A little olive oil
Flour (any kind) for the countertop

1. Have on hand a 12-inch long, oval cast-iron pot, a 5-quart round cast-iron pot, a cast-iron skillet, or a baking sheet. (Listed in order of preference)

2. In a large bowl, or the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, stir the rye flour, whole wheat flour, white flour, instant yeast, caraway seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and salt together until combined.

3. Add the water and stir with a wooden spoon or the paddle attachment until the dough is well mixed. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and push the dough together to form a ball, more or less, don’t obsess. The dough will be sticky. Drizzle a little olive oil on top of the dough and pat it around with your fingers to cover the surface of the dough. Place a piece of plastic wrap directly over the surface and leave overnight, or for 8 to 12 hours.

4. Generously flour the countertop. With a dough scraper or rubber spatula, scrape the dough onto the countertop in one lump and shape it.
   **For an oblong loaf**, push it into an oval shape approximately 9-by-4 inches in size. Flour your hands and the dough. With the long side of the oval parallel to the edge of the counter, roll the dough into a cylinder. Pinch the seam with your fingertips.
   **For a round loaf**, pick up the dough with both hands and stretch the surface of the dough in a downward direction and tuck it under itself to form a ball with a smooth top. Place it on the floured countertop, and cupping your hands around it, turn it in a circle until it is evenly round.

5. Spread a dishtowel (not a terry towel) over a baking sheet or cutting board (so that you can move the loaf around if you need to without disturbing it.) Sprinkle a generous amount of flour on the towel. Place the shaped loaf on the towel and coat it with more flour. Fold the sides and ends of the towel lightly and loosely over the dough. Let rise for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, or until the dough has doubled in size. (If the room is cool, let rise for a longer period.)
6. About 1/2 hour before you are ready to bake the bread, adjust an oven rack to the bottom position. If you have a baking stone, set it on the rack. Place the baking pot of choice with its cover on the rack and heat the oven to 450 degrees.

7. When the dough has risen, use a serrated knife or razor blade to make 3 evenly spaced slashes about 1/2 inch deep.

8. Remove the hot pot or pan from the oven, set it on a potholder, and carefully transfer the dough into it. Clap on the cover. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove the cover and bake for 10 minutes longer.

9. Remove the pot from the oven and transfer the bread to a wire rack to cool. Don’t even think about slicing it until it is cool!

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