



Perfect Country Sandwich Bread

Makes 4 hearty loaves

4 cups warm water

1 2/3 cups dried milk powder

4 TBSP melted butter, cooled slightly

1 TBSP salt

1 cup granulated sugar (192 gm)

2 TBSP active dry yeast or 2 scant TBSP instant yeast (18 gm)

1/2 tsp ground cardamom (1-2 gm)

16 3/4 cups (1664 gm) all purpose flour, or bread flour

1 egg (for egg wash)

Oil or cooking spray for preparing the pans

If you're using active dry yeast, take 1/2 cup of the water and sprinkle in the yeast with 1 tsp sugar. Let the mixture rest until it is foamy. If using instant yeast, you're ready to go.

In a large bowl, combine the all the ingredients except the egg.

Mix until it's combined and shaggy. Turn the dough out onto your work surface and cover with the bowl. Let the dough rest for five minutes.

Uncover the dough, and begin kneading. Pull the dough toward you, fold over, then pick up all the dough from the bottom and flip and slap firmly on the work surface.

Repeat until the dough is smooth and you can create a . Dust very lightly with flour only



as necessary. Form the dough into a smooth ball, and place in a well-oiled bowl. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and allow the dough to rise until doubled in size. The dough will be very tender and fragrant.

Gently turn the dough onto a lightly floured work surface. No punching. Divide the dough into four equal pieces. Cover with a towel, and allow the dough to rest for about five minutes.

To shape pan loaves, gently press the dough into a 6x8 inch rectangle. Try to find a part of the dough that is smooth. Place the smooth side down. Begin with one of the short sides at the top. Fold the dough down 2/3. Seal with the heel of your hand. Turn the dough around so the fold is in front of you and the other short end is at the top. Fold the top toward you by 2/3 and seal again. You'll have a cylinder. Place your palms on each end with thumbs on the seam and fingers bracing the back of the dough. Press with your thumbs on the seam to snug up the dough and reduce the chance of open spaces in the finished loaf. Ease the dough over onto itself, almost folding in half over the seam, and seal again. You'll now have a smooth, tube -shape of dough.

Place the dough in a 9x4 inch loaf pan (lightly oiled or sprayed with cooking spray), seam side down. Repeat with the three other loaves. Gently cover the pans with plastic wrap or a lightly moistened kitchen towel.

Allow the dough to rise until the loaves have risen 1 inch over the top of the pan. It generally takes 45 minutes to 1 hour.

While the dough is rising, preheat your oven to 350 degrees F.



When the loaves are ready, remove the towel or wrap. Using a sharp serrated knife, or bread blade, make three diagonal slashes across the top of the bread. No deeper than 1/4 inch. Whisk the egg in a small bowl, and brush of the top of the bread.

Place the bread in the preheated oven and bake for 25-30 minutes, until the bread is deep golden and the internal temperature is 180 degrees F.

Remove the pans from the oven and place on a cooling rack, with bread on its side. After 1-2 minutes, turn the bread out of the pans and continue to cool with the bread on its side. Be sure the bread is completely baked. If the bread is under baked, it may collapse. If so, quickly place back in the pans and bake for a few more minutes. The hardest part? Waiting five to ten more minutes for the bread to finish cooling before trying a big slice. Like meat, bread needs time to finish baking even after it's out of the oven, so wait if you can.