

Sheltering Arms' Signature Not-Baguettes

a recipe by Nicholas McRae from www.piggymoto.com

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ to 3 cups well-fluffed, unbleached, all-purpose flour
- 2 ½ teaspoons dry, active yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon fine grain sea salt
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened
- 1 cup plus one teaspoon warm water
- 1 egg white
- cooking oil (to wet pans and bowl)

(note: let butter come to room temperature naturally. Do not microwave it or melt it on the stove; these actions will affect the flavor and consistency of the butter.)



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Separate 2 1/2 cups of flour into a large mixing bowl. Add the butter, and mix it into the flour very thoroughly with a fork until it is completely distributed. With the back of a spoon, press out a nice well in the center, into which you will pour your yeast mixture.
3. In a small mixing bowl, combine your yeast, sugar, and two tablespoons of water (which you should take from the 1 cup you've already measured). Mix this up until the sugar and yeast completely dissolve and pour it into the well you've made in the flour.
4. Cover the mixing bowl with a slightly damp cloth, and place this in a warm location for about 15 minutes.
5. After the yeast had had time to double itself, add the rest of the water to the bowl, and mix it all together until the dough begins to stick together. Sprinkle the salt over this, and mix the dough until the salt is distributed thoroughly.
6. Prepare your kneading surface with a generous amount of flour (you will need more than usual, because at this point, the dough is VERY sticky). Turn the dough out onto the floured surface, and knead with well-floured hands. Add up to an additional half cup of flour as needed. Knead until the dough holds together, and feels smooth.
7. Set the dough aside and wash out your mixing bowl. Oil the inside of the bowl until it is slick, and place the dough into it. Roll the dough ball around until it is glazed with oil, cover the bowl with the slightly damp cloth once again, and place this somewhere to rise for about 40 minutes.
8. During this time, clean and re-flour your work surface, and prepare one or two baking sheets by oiling and lightly flouring them (the rolls must not touch prior to or during baking, so you will need either one large sheet, or two smaller ones). You will also need to oil one side of some plastic wrap (enough to cover all of the baking sheets that you will be using). Spray oil works well for this, but you can also dip a clean rag in cooking oil and wipe it onto the plastic wrap.

9. You are looking for the dough to have doubled in size. A simple test is to flour your hand, and poke two fingers about a centimeter or so into the dough ball. If the dough does not spring back immediately, and two little holes are left where you pressed it, then the dough is ready.
10. Punch the dough down to release all the built-up air inside, and turn it out onto your floured work surface.
11. Cut it into 8 equal parts and shape into oblong ovals. Very gently tuck raw (cut) edges under so that the entire outside is smooth, firm and not sticky. Place these onto the prepared tray or trays, giving each one plenty of room to expand (about 3-4 inches).
12. Cover the shaped rolls with your prepared plastic wrap, and let them rise until they have doubled in size (about 30-45 minutes). You can test these by gently pressing a finger against the side of one of your rolls. If you leave an imprint, the rolls have risen enough, and are ready to slash, paint, and bake.
13. While you are waiting, use a clean fork to beat your egg white with 1 teaspoon of water until it is nice and frothy.
14. With a very sharp knife, very gently give each roll a cut along its top, the cut should run its whole length and be about 1/8th of an inch deep. This will give the rolls even more room to expand when they bake, and will also give them a nice shape when all is said and done.
15. Using a very soft basting brush, brush the tops and sides of your rolls with the egg white and water mixture.
16. Gently slide your rolls into the oven now, and bake for 15 – 20 minutes, or until the crusts of your rolls have turned an attractive, golden brown.

Serve fresh and warm with breakfast or dinner. These rolls are fantastic split and slathered with butter and jelly, stuffed with breakfast meat and scrambled eggs or dipped in supper stew - whatever you can think of.

Just remember, they are absolutely NOT baguettes!!

