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RECIPE: NO-KNEAD BAGUETTES

Makes: 4 Baguettes

Note: For a proper crispy crust, you'll need a baking or pizza stone to bake these, plus a wooden bread peel or flat tray to slide them into the oven.

Ingredients

For the Dough:

350g Water (at room temperature)

12g Fresh Yeast or 7g Dried Fast Action Yeast (one sachet)

500g Strong White Bread Flour, plus extra for dusting

10g Salt

Method

Making the Dough

1. In a large mixing bowl weigh in the water and yeast, whisking to dissolve the yeast.
2. Next weigh in the flour and salt. Mix together with your dough scraper to form a rough dough - it will look a bit of a mess but as long as there are no obvious really wet or dry parts it'll be great.
3. Cover loosely with a cloth and leave to rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.

First Fold

1. Lightly flour your work surface then turn out the dough. Shape into a nice ball by gently pinching and pulling the top edge of the dough (12 o'clock position) away from you then fold it into the middle and press down. Rotate the dough slightly then repeat with the top edge again. Keep pulling the top edge out and into the middle and turning the dough, about 12-15 turns should do. Roll the dough over so the smooth side is on top and return to the bowl. Cover again and leave to rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Second Fold

1. Turn the dough out again, making sure it lands upside down (with the sticky side facing up and the smooth side underneath). Repeat the folds above but this time for only about 10 turns, return to the bowl with the smooth side on top, cover and rest for another 30 minutes.

Dividing and Pre-Shaping

1. Turn out the dough upside down again. Flatten out slightly with your fingertips then use your dough scraper to divide it into 4 equal pieces.

2. Roll each piece into a loose sausage-shape, making sure the seams are tucked underneath. Leave to rest for 15 minutes.

Final Shaping

1. Place a proving cloth on a large baking tray and dust well with flour.
2. Take one baguette and flip over (seam-side up). Flatten out gently with your fingers to a rough rectangle. Now roll up into a tight sausage shape - fold over the top edge and press down on itself to seal. Repeat, folding and rolling the top edge, pressing to seal each time, until you've got a tight sausage or Swiss roll.
3. Roll the dough under your palms to about 30cm in length and taper the ends to gentle points (if you like).
4. Gently lift the baguette onto the lined tray with the seam-side facing up.
5. Repeat with the other 3 baguettes, pulling up the proving cloth between each on the tray, making a pleat or fabric divider to keep them apart.
6. Leave to rest for 30 minutes.

Baking

1. Preheat your oven to 230°C/Fan 210°C/Gas Mark 8. Put a baking stone on the top or middle shelf to heat up and a deep roasting tin in the bottom of the oven.
2. Just before you're ready to bake, pop the kettle on to boil. Carefully transfer the baguettes, placing seam-side down, onto a wooden bread peel or large flat tray (without a lipped edge).
3. Make a few diagonal slashes on top of each baguette with a grignette or sharp knife.
4. Swiftly but carefully, slide the baguettes from the peel directly onto the hot stone. Pour 2-3cm of boiling water into the bottom roasting tin to create steam.
5. Bake for 15-20 minutes. Keep an eye that the baguettes aren't colouring too fast - turn down the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas Mark 6 if it looks like they might start to burn (see Tips below).
6. When crusty and golden-brown, transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Tips from me...

This recipe requires a few bits of specialist kit, have a look at these videos if you need a few tips on what they are and how to use them:

- [Bread Tip #69: What is "Stone Baked" Bread?](#)
- [Bread Tip #79: How to Clean your Bread Linen](#)
- [Bread tip #81: What is a Bakers Peel?](#)
- [Bread Tip #118: How to Change the Blade on your Bordelaise Grignette](#)

Baguettes are a real CRAFT. I'm not going to lie, the first few bakes might not be perfect, but keep practising and you'll get better, and more knowledgeable, every time. Rustic and crusty, you can't beat them.

When rolling the baguettes, it can be tempting to make them as LONG as possible, but this just makes it trickier to handle them. Aim for about 30cm and that's a decent-sized baguette.

For the best crust, a high heat is crucial. Using a baking stone allows them to really crisp up and you want to keep the oven temperature high for as long as possible. Everybody's oven is different though, so just keep an eye on them - you may need to whip them out after 12 minutes or reduce the oven temperature to bake them through without burning.

I find weighing out liquids in grams WAY more accurate than measuring in volume. To do it, just place an empty jug onto your scales, make sure it is set to zero, and pour in the amount you need.

If you fancy investing in some equipment, such as dough scrapers, grignettes and baking peels, have a look at my bakewithjack.co.uk/shop - I LOVE using these kinds of things and hope you will, too.