



February 2012

MAKE STONE GROUND BREAD



BACKGROUND

Bread is one of the oldest prepared foods. Evidence from 30 000 years ago in Europe revealed starch residue on rocks used for pounding plants. Around 10 000 BC, with the spread of agriculture, grains became the mainstay of making bread. Yeast spores are ubiquitous, including the surface of cereal grains, so any dough left to rest will become naturally leavened. There were multiple sources of leavening available for early bread. Airborne yeasts could be harnessed by leaving uncooked dough exposed to air for some time before cooking. Pliny the Elder reported that the Gauls and Iberians used the foam skimmed from beer to produce "a lighter kind of bread than other peoples." The most common source of leavening was to retain a piece of dough from the previous day to use as a form of sourdough starter.

A major advance happened in 1961 with the development of the Chorleywood bread process, which used the intense mechanical working of dough to dramatically reduce the fermentation period and the time taken to produce a loaf. The process, whose high-energy mixing allows for the use of lower protein grain, is now widely used around the world in large factories. As a result, bread can be produced very quickly and at low costs to the manufacturer and the consumer.

However, it is in this very process that much of the nutrients are removed. Stone-grinding preserves these nutrients so that the flour is more healthy. In addition, baking the bread over a longer period of time ensures that the bread is more nutritious.



Acknowledgements: The recipe and photographs of making stone ground bread are from Kerry and Steve Baytopp, from WESSA's BushPigs Outdoor Education Centre.

Making Stone Ground Bread

You will need:

- 3 cups stone ground bread flour
- 1 cup stone ground rye flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp instant yeast
- 1 tsp salt
- +- 2 cups water

What to do

Step 1: Mix the yeast with a little water and put it to one side. Dissolve the salt in one cup water.

Step 2: Add water to the flour and mix adding more water when necessary.

Step 3: Add the yeast that was dissolved in the water and knead into the dough. (**Only** knead long enough to mix the yeast into the dough. It does not require a lot of kneading).

Step 4: Allow the dough to rest in the fridge overnight or longer.

Step 5: Remove the dough from the fridge and shape into a Portuguese loaf and place on a baking pan.



Step 6: Sprinkle with a lot of flour. Allow to rise, then bake at 190°C until brown.

Step 7: The bread can be baked in both a conventional oven or a cob stove (see *How To Build A Fuel Efficient Clay Stove*).



You can make the bread 50% rye – the more that is added, the heavier the bread becomes.



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