

- Prep Time: 25 minutes
 - Rise Time: 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours
 - Cook Time: 35 minutes
 - Total Time: 2 hours 30 minutes to 3 hours
 - Yield: 1 standard 9×5-inch loaf (approx. 12 slices)
 - Intensity Level: Beginner / Intermediate (Requires kneading)
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Table of Contents



- [Ingredients](#)
- [Instructions](#)
 - [Step 1: Activate the Yeast \(5 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 2: Mix the Dry Ingredients \(2 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 3: Combine Wet and Dry Ingredients \(3 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 4: Knead the Dough \(8-10 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High\)](#)
 - [Step 5: First Rise \(60-90 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 6: Punch Down and Shape \(10 minutes | Intensity: Medium\)](#)
 - [Step 7: Second Rise \(45-60 minutes | Intensity: Low\)](#)
 - [Step 8: Bake \(35 minutes | Intensity: Medium\)](#)
 - [Step 9: Cool \(at least 1 hour | Intensity: Low\)](#)

- [Nutrition Information \(Estimated\)](#)

Ingredients

For the Dough:

- 3 ½ to 4 cups (420g – 480g) all-purpose flour or bread flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 2 ¼ teaspoons (1 packet / 7g) active dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons (25g) granulated sugar
- 1 ¼ teaspoons (7g) fine sea salt
- 1 cup (240ml) warm milk (110°F / 43°C – see note)
- ¼ cup (60ml) warm water (110°F / 43°C)
- 2 tablespoons (28g) unsalted butter, softened (plus extra for greasing)

Optional Egg Wash:

- 1 large egg beaten with 1 tablespoon of milk or water

Instructions

Step 1: Activate the Yeast (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

In a small bowl or a liquid measuring cup, combine the warm milk, warm water, and granulated sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Sprinkle the active dry yeast over the surface of the liquid. Give it a gentle stir and let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes until the mixture becomes frothy and bubbly on top. *If the yeast does not foam, it is likely dead, and you will need to start over with fresh yeast.*

Step 2: Mix the Dry Ingredients (2 minutes | Intensity: Low)

While the yeast is proofing, combine 3 ½ cups of flour and the salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook (or a large mixing bowl if kneading by hand). Stir briefly to combine.

Step 3: Combine Wet and Dry Ingredients (3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Pour the frothy yeast mixture into the flour mixture. Add the softened butter. Turn the mixer on low speed (or stir with a wooden spoon) until a shaggy dough forms and no dry flour remains.

Step 4: Knead the Dough (8-10 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

Using a Stand Mixer: Increase the speed to medium-low and knead for 8 to 10 minutes. The dough should pull away from the sides of the bowl and form a smooth, elastic ball. If the dough is too sticky and sticking to the bottom, add flour 1 tablespoon at a time.

By Hand: Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead vigorously for 10 to 12 minutes, using the heel of your hand to push the dough away and folding it back over itself.

Add minimal flour to prevent sticking. The dough is ready when it is smooth, soft, and slightly tacky to the touch, and passes the “windowpane test” (you can stretch a small piece thin enough to see light through it without tearing).

Step 5: First Rise (60-90 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Lightly grease a large bowl with butter or oil. Place the kneaded dough into the bowl, turning it once to coat the surface. Cover the bowl loosely with a damp kitchen towel or plastic wrap. Place it in a warm, draft-free spot (around 75°F – 80°F) and let it rise until doubled in size. This typically takes 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the ambient temperature.

Step 6: Punch Down and Shape (10 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Gently punch down the risen dough to release the air. Turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Using a rolling pin or your hands, gently press the dough into a rectangle roughly 9 inches wide and 12 inches long, to knock out any large air bubbles.

Starting from the short end (the 9-inch side), tightly roll the dough into a log. Pinch the seam and the ends to seal. Place the shaped loaf, seam-side down, into a greased 9×5-inch loaf pan.

Step 7: Second Rise (45-60 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Cover the loaf pan loosely with a damp towel. Let the dough rise again in a warm place until it has puffed up and reached just about 1 inch above the rim of the pan. This usually takes 45 to 60 minutes.

Step 8: Bake (35 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) during the last 20 minutes of the second rise. If desired, gently brush the top of the loaf with the egg wash for a shiny, golden crust.

Bake in the preheated oven for 30 to 35 minutes. The bread is done when it is deep golden

brown and sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom. If the top is browning too quickly, tent it loosely with aluminum foil after the 20-minute mark.

Step 9: Cool (at least 1 hour | Intensity: Low)

Carefully remove the bread from the pan and transfer it to a wire cooling rack. Crucial step: Allow the bread to cool completely (at least 1 hour) before slicing. Cutting into hot bread can cause the crumb to become gummy.

Nutrition Information (Estimated)

Please note: Nutritional values are estimates and will vary based on specific ingredients and slice size.

- Serving Size: 1 slice (based on a 12-slice loaf)
- Calories: ~150 kcal
- Total Fat: ~3g (Saturated Fat: 1.5g)
- Cholesterol: ~7mg
- Sodium: ~240mg
- Total Carbohydrates: ~26g (Dietary Fiber: 1g, Total Sugars: 3g)

- Protein: ~4g