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|---|---|
| Prep Time | 10 minutes |
| Rise Time | 1½–2 hours |
| Cook Time | 30–35 minutes |
| Total Time | Approximately 2 hours 15 minutes |
| Yield | 2 round loaves |
| Intensity | Easy (No kneading, but timing the rise is important) |
| Equipment | Large mixing bowl, wooden spoon, 2 oven-safe bowls or 2 loaf pans (1-quart size), baking sheet |

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Table of Contents


- 🥣 Ingredients
- 🔪 Instructions
  - Step 1: Activate the Yeast (5 minutes | Easy)
  - Step 2: Mix the Dough (3 minutes | Easy)
  - Step 3: Prepare the Pans (3 minutes | Easy)
  - Step 4: Shape the Loaves (3 minutes | Medium Intensity)
  - Step 5: Second Rise (30 minutes | Easy)
  - Step 6: Bake (30–35 minutes | Medium Intensity)
  - Step 7: Cool and Brush (5 minutes | Easy)
- 🍽️ Serving & Storage
- 📊 Nutrition Information (Estimated)


## 🥣 Ingredients

- 4 cups (500g) all-purpose flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 2 teaspoons (8g) kosher salt

- 2 teaspoons (8g) active dry yeast or instant yeast
- 2 cups (480ml) warm water (about 110°F / 43°C—warm to the touch but not hot)
- 2 tablespoons melted butter or olive oil (for greasing the pans)
- 2 tablespoons cornmeal or flour (for dusting the pans)
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted (for brushing the baked loaves, optional)

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## Instructions

### Step 1: Activate the Yeast (5 minutes | Easy)

In a large mixing bowl, combine the warm water and yeast. Stir gently and let it sit for 5 minutes until the yeast begins to foam and bubble. If your yeast doesn't foam, it's dead—start with a fresh packet. If you're using instant yeast, you can skip this step and add it directly to the dry ingredients.

### Step 2: Mix the Dough (3 minutes | Easy)

Add the flour and salt to the yeast mixture. Stir with a wooden spoon until the flour is fully incorporated and no dry streaks remain. The dough will be wet, sticky, and shaggy—much wetter than traditional bread dough. This high hydration is what gives peasant bread its tender, airy crumb. Do not knead. Cover the bowl with a clean kitchen towel or plastic wrap and let it rise at room temperature for 1½ to 2 hours, until doubled in size and bubbly.

## Step 3: Prepare the Pans (3 minutes | Easy)

About 15 minutes before the dough is ready, preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C). Generously grease two 1-quart oven-safe bowls or loaf pans with melted butter or olive oil, making sure to coat the bottom and sides. Dust the greased pans with cornmeal or flour, tapping out the excess. Place the pans on a baking sheet.

## Step 4: Shape the Loaves (3 minutes | Medium Intensity)

Once the dough has doubled, stir it down gently with a wooden spoon to deflate it. Using well-floured hands or two spoons, divide the dough evenly between the two prepared pans. Do not knead or shape—just let the dough slump naturally into the pan. The surface should be rough and irregular, which gives the baked loaf its rustic character. If the dough is too sticky to handle, dust your hands with flour.

## Step 5: Second Rise (30 minutes | Easy)

Let the dough rise in the pans, uncovered, for 30 minutes while the oven preheats. The dough should puff up slightly and reach the rim of the pans. If your kitchen is cold, this may take 35–40 minutes.

## Step 6: Bake (30–35 minutes | Medium Intensity)

Place the baking sheet with the pans in the center of the preheated oven. Bake for 30–35 minutes, until the loaves are golden brown and sound hollow when tapped on the bottom. Rotate the pans halfway through for even browning. If the tops are browning too quickly, tent them loosely with foil for the final 10 minutes.

## Step 7: Cool and Brush (5 minutes | Easy)

Remove the loaves from the pans immediately and transfer them to a wire rack. Brush the tops with melted butter if desired for a soft, shiny crust. Let the loaves cool for at least 10 minutes before slicing—cutting too soon releases steam and can make the interior gummy.

## Serving & Storage

- Serve: Slice warm and serve with butter, olive oil, or alongside soup and salad. It’s also excellent toasted for sandwiches or turned into croutons.
- Storage: Store cooled bread in a paper bag at room temperature for up to 3 days, or wrap tightly in plastic and freeze for up to 3 months. Reheat in a 350°F (175°C) oven for 5–7 minutes to refresh the crust.
- Note: This bread has no preservatives, so it stales faster than commercial bread. Slice and freeze leftovers on day two.

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## Nutrition Information (Estimated)

*Note: Nutritional values are estimates per serving (1 slice, about ⅛ of one loaf) and will vary based on flour brand and slice size. Values do not include the optional butter brushing.*

| Nutrient | Amount per Serving (1 slice) |
|---|---|
| Calories | ~120 kcal |
| Total Fat | 0.3 g |
| Saturated Fat | 0 g |
| Cholesterol | 0 mg |
| Sodium | 240 mg |
| Total Carbohydrates | 25 g |
| Dietary Fiber | 1 g |

| Nutrient | Amount per Serving (1 slice) |
| --- | --- |
| Total Sugars | 0 g |
| Protein | 4 g |