



Simple Breads

FOR THE

Season

TEXT BY PATTY LANOUE STEARNS PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD ZAWISTOWSKI

Whole Wheat Flatbread



Try these recipes for savory and sweet breads. They'll fill your home with heavenly scents and make your family and friends feel loved.

Chocolate Zucchini Bread



Michigan Balaton Cherry Focaccia

Whole Wheat Flat Bread

These savory Moroccan rounds need to rise several times, but your kitchen time will be worth it. Serve them warm with dips or with cheese.

- ¾ pound whole-wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon superfine sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 teaspoons dry active yeast
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ cup fine cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 medium-size egg, beaten
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds

In a bowl, combine ¾ cup of the whole-wheat flour, the sugar, salt and warm water. Sprinkle with the yeast, whisk well and cover with plastic wrap. Leave in a warm place for 30 minutes or until mixture begins to froth.

In a large mixing bowl, sift the rest of the whole-wheat flour, paprika and cornmeal, then add the oil. Lightly whisk the yeast mixture before stirring it into the flour and mix together to form a firm dough. Turn onto a lightly floured board and knead for about 5 minutes until dough is smooth and elastic.

Place in a large bowl, cover with plastic and let rise in a warm place about 45 minutes. When it doubles in size, divide into 16 even portions, then roll each into a ball. On a lightly floured board, flatten each into a round with a rolling pin.

Place on 2 greased baking sheets and brush with beaten egg. Top with sesame seeds. Let stand another 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake about 12 minutes or until golden. Cool on a wire rack. Serves 16.

Chocolate Zucchini Bread

This is art director Diane Kolak's family recipe—it bakes up like a rich, moist brownie.

- 1 large egg
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ tablespoon vanilla
- 1 cup shredded zucchini
- 1¼ cups flour
- ¼ cup unsweetened baking cocoa (Hershey's Special Dark Chocolate is divine)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon baking powder

Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat egg, oil, sugar and vanilla. Stir in zucchini. In separate bowl, combine dry ingredients. Add to zucchini mixture and mix well. Pour into loaf pan and bake at 350°F for 50 to 60 minutes. Makes 8-12 servings.

Judy's Cranberry Bread

(PICTURED ON COVER)

Make this ultra-moist bread from scratch or take the shortcut that my sister, Judy Perricone, loves. Every year she makes 12 loaves for her appreciative friends at work.

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 3 soft, ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 325°F. Cream sugar and shortening; add eggs, flour, soda, bananas, vanilla and chopped nuts. Pour banana bread batter into 1 greased and floured loaf pan; bake at 325°F for about 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Makes 1 loaf.

For the shortcut, use Pillsbury Banana Nut Quick Bread, 2 cups whole cranberries and 1 cup chopped walnuts. Follow directions on mix, add cranberries and walnuts, and bake as directed. Makes 1 loaf.

Michigan Balaton Cherry Focaccia

Mouthwatering and festive, this recipe from my *Cherry Home Companion* cookbook is killer for breakfast or dessert.

DOUGH:

- 1½ cups warm water
- 2 tablespoons yeast
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ½ teaspoon mahlep powder* (or almond extract)
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 5-6 cups bread flour
- Parchment paper

*Mahlep powder is a Turkish seasoning made from ground cherry pit centers.

TOPPING:

- ⅓ cup unsalted butter, melted
- ½ cup sugar
- 1-2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 cups fresh (or frozen) pitted Balaton cherries or a mixture of tart and sweet cherries (halved and whole)

In a large bowl or in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook, whisk together water and yeast. Let stand a few minutes then stir in sugar, salt, vanilla, mahlep powder (or almond extract), eggs, butter, and most of the flour. Stir until you have a soft mass. Knead for 8 to 10 minutes to form a soft dough, adding more flour as required. Form dough into a ball and place it in a well-greased bowl. Cover, and let rise for 45 to 60 minutes.

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. When dough has risen, gently deflate and flatten to fit sheet. If it springs back, let it rest a moment then coax to fit sheet. Insert entire sheet in a large plastic bag. Let rise 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Generously brush dough with the melted butter. Generously dust with sugar and cinnamon and then scatter cherries on top.

Bake until bread is golden and cherries are softened and oozing, 45 to 55 minutes. Cut into slabs to serve. Serves 10 to 12. 🍴



Cheddar Dill Puffs

We found this recipe in the August 2003 issue of *Gourmet*, and the puffs are perfect as appetizers. You'll need parchment and a pastry bag with a half-inch plain tip (or a plastic storage bag with a hole cut in one corner).

- 1 cup water
- 1 stick (½ cup) unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon pieces
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 or 5 large eggs
- 6 ounces extra-sharp yellow cheddar, finely grated
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill

Preheat oven to 375°F. Bring water to a boil with the butter and salt in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over high heat, and then reduce to medium. Add flour all at once and cook, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon until mixture pulls away from the side of the pan, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly, about 3 minutes, then add 4 eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Batter will appear to separate, then become smooth. Mixture should be glossy and just stiff enough to hold soft peaks and fall softly from a spoon. If batter is too stiff, beat remain-

ing egg in a small bowl and add to batter one teaspoon at a time, beating and then testing batter until it reaches proper consistency. Stir in cheese and dill. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment or lightly butter sheets. Fill pastry bag with batter and pipe 15 1-inch-diameter mounds (or spoon level tablespoons) 1 inch apart on sheets. Bake in upper and lower thirds of oven, switching position of sheets halfway through baking, until puffed, golden and crisp, about 30 minutes total. Make more puffs in same manner. Makes about 60 puffs.