



10 Grain Whole Wheat Bread

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

White whole wheat flour (approximately 500 grams or 4 cups) Ten-grain hot cereal mix (Bob's Red Mill - 1 dry cup) 1 egg white Water Yeast, dry active Some olive oil Salt Yeast food (e.g., sugar, molasses, honey, agave nectar) Seeds if you want - I recommend sunflower or pumpkin, raw

Instructions

This recipe requires no power tools. Your hands are enough!

Start by cooking the ten-grain mix ahead of time. One cup of grains, three cups of water, bring just to a boil and then turn off the heat and cover. Leave it for a couple of hours.

As a warning, the ten-grain mix is the only thing in this recipe that I measure. I make this bread about every week, so it's become instinctual. I'll try to help you out if you're new to bread, though.

Wake the yeast. I like to put about half a teaspoon of molasses in a small bowl, sprinkle some yeast on top, maybe a teaspoon (I buy it in bulk, use one packet if you buy it in packets). Use the wrist test under your tap to get water that's nice and warm but won't kill your yeast - it should feel neither hot nor cold on the inside of your wrist. Half a cup is plenty of water for your beasties.

While the yeast is waking up, get a big, wide, shallow bowl and put your flour in it. Add about a tablespoon of salt. Add the cooked ten grain flour. (Why is it important to cook it first? If you don't, it will suck all the moisture out of your bread; if you do, it keeps the bread nice and moist for at least a week, and mine's always gone by then.) Since I store my flour in the freezer, the warmth of the cooked grain porridge brings it to a nice workable temp that doesn't put my yeast back to sleep. Stir everything together. Your yeast should be starting to bubble by now; add that, too. You don't have to wait for it to get super foamy. Start to knead.

Whole wheat flour tends to cut gluten, so the dough must be kneaded longer. Go at it for a while, adding flour or water, whichever you need. After a while, it should stop sticking to your hands and be soft but unified, and you should be able to pick up the whole dough ball with one hand without it breaking (just long enough to turn it over, say). Add the egg white and knead until it's integrated. It can be gross for a couple of minutes, but that goes away. Add the seeds and knead until they're all in there. Pour some olive on top and rub it to coat, then cover the bowl with a towel and let it rise at least two hours.

Cut the risen dough in half and flatten it with your hands, then roll it into a loaf shape. Pinch the seams together as much as possible. Slap the loaves down on a sheet pan with some parchment paper on it, and squish them so they're really skinny and tall (they'll relax and look normal after a few minutes).

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees and wait fifteen minutes. Then slash the tops of the loaves and stick them in the oven. Bake 40 minutes.

Take them out, brush the tops with a little butter, and stash on a rack to cool. Sometimes we can't wait, but it's better to wait at least 20 minutes for the inside of the bread to firm up. Then cut and eat.

Store the loaf you're eating at room temp in a plastic bag with a paper towel inside to regulate moisture. Store the extra loaf in the freezer, if you don't plan to eat it within a couple of days. Then just thaw it for a few hours and you're good to go.

This loaf holds up well even sliced relatively thin, and it's rich without being heavy. It's basically my favorite bread ever, and it's 100% whole wheat with lots of extra whole grain goodness to boot!
