

Recipes for Common ground whole wheat or rye.

Some time back, the topic of bread for the Common Kitchen that feeds the Fair volunteers came up at a steering committee meeting. Folks thought it would be neat if there could be a way to bake bread on site. Turns out there was. As a long-time member of MOFGA, a bakery owner, and a Board Member of the Maine Grain Alliance, it was logical for me to step up. MGA has a portable wood-fired oven made locally by Maine Wood Heat. These folks were happy to offer us one of theirs to use as well. I put together a team of bakers, assembled tools, arranged for flour donations from King Arthur, and we were good to go. Each year we bake large quantities of bread for the Common Kitchen. The two recipes I came up with use OG white flour, with either whole wheat or whole rye. You can use either interchangeably in this master recipe.

As I am Education Director for MGA, I can't help using this opportunity to assist home bakers in their efforts to improve their product. Here, several useful techniques are introduced, if you have not used them yet. First, is the preferment; here we use a version of what is termed a "poolish". This consists of flour and water with a small amount of yeast allowed to ripen overnight. This step greatly improves the quality and flavor of the dough, and the bread keeps much longer. Second, if you don't already have one, I recommend strongly that you use a kitchen scale that reads in grams and has a tare function. Almost all bread cookbooks over the last many years give recipes in weight, using baker's percentage (can't cover that here, but you will not need it to use the recipe). I give a second version by volume as well. Finally, I also suggest you begin baking in a Dutch oven. I give the instructions here. The results will equal those of the finest artisan bakeries.

Recipe by weight. Use either whole wheat or rye, both work fine. Follow instructions for the volume recipe below using these amounts instead. This makes 2 loaves, each 1# 8Oz, or 680g.

This Excel spreadsheet will be available from the MGA web site in due course, and it allows changing both the size of the loaf and the number of loaves easily an advantage of using baker's percentage.

	Bkrs %		
Total Flour (g)	100%	<input type="text" value="788"/>	g
Poolish:			
White Flour	29%	229	g
H2O	34%	268	g
Yeast	0.10%	0.39	g
Dough:			
Poolish	all	497	g
White Flour	41%	323	g
Whole Flour	30%	236	g
H2O	36%	284	g
Yeast	0.60%	5	g
Salt	2%	16	g
Total dough (g)		1360	g
Enter #Loaves	<input type="text" value="2"/>	2.0	
% Hydration:	70%		
Coeff=	1.73		
Scale (Oz):	<input type="text" value="24"/>	680	g

Recipe by volume. This will produce 2 slightly smaller loaves, each about 1# 6Oz (525g) which matters at baking time.

I Overnight Polish:

White bread or all purpose flour: 1 ½ C
Water at room temperature: 1 ½ C
Instant dry yeast: ¼ Tsp

Hydrate the yeast in the water. If using regular dry yeast, hydrate in ¼ C of the water warmed to 95°. Mix all ingredients thoroughly in a bowl, cover, and leave at room temperature overnight.

II Dough:

White or all purpose bread flour: 2-3 C (see below)
Whole wheat or rye flour: 1 ½ C
Water: ½ C
Instant Yeast: 2 Tsp
Salt: 2 Tsp

Mix the yeast into the water. Warm to 95° if you don't have instant dried yeast. Add to the polish and stir in. Add the salt next and stir that in. Next, add all the whole grain flour, mixing it well. Begin adding the last of the white flour until you can no longer stir it, then turn out on a floured board or table and begin kneading, adding flour as necessary to control stickiness. Try to keep this amount to around 2 C. Another important principle of getting artisan bread quality, is to keep the hydration level high, so learn to live with sticky dough. Kneading will take about 10 minutes and you will feel the dough "strengthen" as you go along. Put the dough in a bowl large enough to accommodate about 3X the volume of the kneaded dough. Primary fermentation will take about 1 ½ h at about 75°. Another artisan baking trick comes in here. This is called the "stretch and fold". 15 minutes after starting this fermentation, turn the dough back out on the board, pick it up from one side and let it sag down. Fold this over making a rough ball again, turn it 90° and repeat for a total of four times. This will vastly improve the strength of the dough and will let you use higher levels of hydration. This should be done 2X more at 15 minute intervals.

After the 1 ½ h, turn out the dough once more, divide it in half, and do a rough pre-shape into a ball. Shaping is crucial, and best seen. I am preparing videos covering shaping that will be available from both MOFGA for the virtual Fair, and on the Maine Grain Alliance web site. Poorly shaped dough will not bake into nice, full loaves and be flat and heavy. The final shape should take place after the pre-shaped loaves sit for about 20 minutes to let the gluten relax. After final shaping, the loaves should be allowed rise once more, or "proof" seam side up for about one hour. This can occur in colanders lined with lightly floured tea towels and covered to prevent drying out. If you plan on using a Dutch oven, you can only bake one at a time, so after about 45 minutes, put one of the loaves into the refrigerator to prevent it from over-proofing.

Baking

You are now ready to bake. About a half an hour prior to the dough being proofed, turn your oven up to 500° and pop your Dutch oven in to heat. When it is time for the bread to go in, gently put the first loaf in seam side down. Be careful of the edges! Then score the loaf. This means slashing the surface about ¼ inch deep with a razor blade or very sharp knife. This allows the loaf to open up and get fluffier when it hits the heat, and artistic license is encouraged. Turn the heat down to 450° put the cover back on and bake for 20 minutes. After this time, take the lid off. Continue to bake until done. If using the recipe by weight, this will take about another 20 minutes and possibly half that for the smaller loaf done from volume measurements. I suggest getting a quick-read kitchen thermometer to be sure you have a fully baked loaf. I bake to an internal temperature of between 205° and 208°. Thwacking the bottom of the loaf and listening for a hollow “echo” works as well, but takes practice. If you have an oven light, check the loaf periodically once the cover is off. When it starts to brown more deeply, this is an indication you are close to being done.

Remove the first loaf, recover and reheat the Dutch oven to 500 °, and repeat the process for the second loaf.

The instructions are the same for the recipe given by weight.

If you don't have a Dutch oven, or are not quite ready to make this jump, simply bake both loaves on a cookie sheet at 400° for about 45 minutes, checking for doneness as above. Time will vary by oven, so stay alert.