

fallen to blood heat, add one cake of crumbled dry yeast cake and stir. Cover snugly, set aside in a warm place away from air currents, and leave it there to ferment. The following morning this mixture should contain much yeast foam on the surface. Strain and add enough water to meet the required absorption of the flour.

If a "starter" is used, instead of the above proportions use four ounces of sugar and one and a fourth ounces of salt, and follow the above directions. The next morning save out half a pint and place it in a fruit jar, which may be set away in a cool place ready to use as the starter. The remaining pint and a half of yeast preparation is strained and diluted with the required amount of water.

#### The Danger of Rough Handling

"The use of too little water is the most prevalent cause for failure to make good bread," adds Mr. Olson. The dough should be almost slack enough to cling to the hand. A stiff dough is slow to rise, and in case fermentation is prolonged it will sour and never spring in the oven. Dough of proper consistency will rise rapidly and develop into "well-piled" loaves of good texture when baked. It is better to use too much water than too little, for in the former case the time of fermentation can be shortened and baking prolonged to dry off the excess water. Upon mixing, if the dough is too stiff it is possible to overcome this by adding more water and working it gently and thoroughly.

Giving directions for the handling of dough, Mr. Olson says:

"Mix one pound of flour with all of the yeast and water, either with a spoon or a bread-mixer. Let it stand for a few minutes, and then gradually work in the remaining two and three-quarter pounds of flour. Never force the flour to take up the water. If the hands are used the dough should be partly lifted and half turned toward or away from you. The mixing operation should be continued until all the ingredients have been thoroughly mixed. The same precaution should be exercised in kneading the rising dough. Knead gently and thoroughly until all the large gas pockets have been worked out. A thorough mixing followed by two gentle kneadings is best with some flours, whereas with others the mere handling in the last kneading to shape into loaves gives the best results. If the mixing, kneading and other operations are done with force there is danger of lessening the activity of the yeast, in which cases the dough fails to rise. On the other hand, over-fermented doughs, when placed in the oven to bake, will fall. In such cases it is advisable to knead and let the dough rise again, although the quality of such bread will be more or less impaired."

Since a measure full of one flour will weigh more than a measure full of another, it should be weighed, not measured. Also, it is more satisfactory to weigh the water. The proper amount of water must be determined for each lot of flour, and it is therefore preferable to purchase flour, not a sack at a time but in barrel lots. Mr. Olson adds that flour generally improves with age. Inasmuch as scientific methods to determine the amount of water a flour requires are impracticable for household purposes, he suggests the following simpler plan:

Using a fairly accurate scale and a small apothecary's graduate, weigh out three or four lots of flour of four ounces each. In one lot add two ounces of prepared yeast preparation; in another, two and four-tenths ounces; and in a third, two and eight-tenths ounces. If the one with two and eight-tenths ounces is too soft, while the one with two and four-tenths ounces is a little too stiff, mix the fourth lot with two and five-tenths ounces of the yeast preparation. Mix, set aside in a warm place and let rise until light; then bake and observe which combination gives the best results. The one which, according to your judgment, gives the best result indicates also the required amount of yeast solution to use. The quantity of yeast preparation used for four ounces of flour multiplied by fifteen will give the quantity required for five one-pound loaves of bread; or, multiplied by three, will give the quantity required for each three-fourths of a pound of flour to make a one-pound loaf of bread.

#### The Quality of Flour

In addition to the character of the wheat employed, the method of manufac-

ture is also a most important factor in determining the value of a flour for bread-making. Good workmanship in milling flour is necessary to secure quality, and the good workmanship must be combined with the best of appliances for manufacture. Each flour possesses an individuality that is determined by the character of the wheat and the method of manufacture.

Then, too, good yeast is as necessary to good bread as is good flour. If the yeast is too old or does not contain a sufficient number of active yeast cells, fermentation will be slow and there will be a tendency to prolong the process to such an extent as to soften or injure the physical qualities of the gluten. When this occurs, the gas that is formed is lost from the weakened dough and the loaf is small and of poor texture. A prolonged fermentation period cannot make good the lack of freshness and quality in the yeast. Too little yeast will, of course, yield a badly raised loaf, but too much yeast is just as objectionable, as the bubbles formed in the gluten of the flour, unable to resist the pressure of the excessive amount of gas, break open, the gas escapes the dough becomes heavy and soggy.

Too much yeast also gives an unpleasant "yeasty" taste to the bread, due partly to the presence of superfluous yeast cells. Even when used in small quantities yeast has a decided influence on the flavor of the bread. The amount of yeast which should be used depends on the strength of the flour. A flour in which gluten is abundant and tenacious can resist a much stronger pressure of gas than one with scant or weak gluten.

Occasionally an insufficient amount of water is used in making the dough. If there is not enough water the gluten fails to develop physically. With strong flours 65 per cent of water or other liquid is necessary to make a good dough. With weak flours 10 per cent or so less water is required. Good yeast and a proper adjustment of the amount of water to the flour used are essentials that are too frequently over-looked in bread-making. A strong flour will stand more mixing, kneading and manipulation than a weak flour. A flour of poor quality and small amount of gluten is easily injured. Another essential is the regulation of the temperature during fermentation. From 75 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit is the best.

If the temperature is either too high or too low good bread is not secured. In bread-making the measuring cup and the thermometer should be the guides; the finger is a poor thermometer. Sometimes the yeast is dissolved in water that is taken from the teakettle and warmer than it appears. If it is above 125 degrees the vitality of the yeast is greatly impaired.

It is false economy to use poor flour because it is cheap. The cost of the raw materials for six loaves of bread made from good flour is usually about a cent more than when poor, low-gluten flour is used. When you consider the difference in quality and in food value, however, the strong flour is much the cheaper. Moreover, if the bread is good more is eaten and a saving of more expensive foods is effected. If the flour is strong in gluten it is not necessary to use such large amounts of meat to balance the ration, because the bread is already balanced as to protein content for tissue-repairing and vital purposes. When you consider that a pound of flour yields over 1600 calories and a pound of meat only 1200; that the strong, glutinous flours

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