

BREAD AND BREAD MAKING

In most households bread is the chief cereal food served, and is often called the "Staff of Life." It is most important that the bread should be well made, light and crusty, that it may be wholesome, nutritious and palatable.

When well made it is a food of which we do not tire. Soggy bread forms tough lumps which the digestive organs cannot work upon as they should, and when such bread is eaten daily it may do serious harm.

A good loaf of bread should be light, the cavities of uniform size and evenly distributed throughout the loaf. The loaf should be small, rather than large, that it may be thoroughly baked, the crust should be a golden brown, and either soft or crisp, but not tough.

INGREDIENTS NEEDED FOR BREAD MAKING

The necessary ingredients for bread making are flour, liquid and yeast.

LIQUIDS USED

The liquids used may be water, rice water, potato water, whey milk or milk and water. Starchy water, such as potato or rice water, makes a more moist loaf. Milk changes the flavor of the loaf, makes it richer in food value and a more tender crumb and crust. Usually one cup of liquid is allowed for each loaf of bread the size of a brick loaf pan.

FLOUR

White flour is the most important in bread making, with rye flour second. When wheat is ground into a fine flour, it has the power of stretching and expanding, making it ideal for bread making. It holds the air and carbon dioxide, and hardens on baking, forming the framework of the loaf of bread.

Corn and oats lack this quality, and therefore they are combined with white flour for baking purposes. Rye flour may be used alone or with white flour in bread making.

Americans have formed the habit of eating almost exclusively bread made with white flour alone, not realizing that other breads, such as rye, rye meal, whole wheat, whole cornmeal and oatmeal, are very good to eat and richer in food value. Bread made with white flour alone does not contain the lime or other mineral salts necessary to build up bones and teeth for growing children. The coarser cereals also relieve constipation.

The present emergency demands that we use less wheat, and it is a good lesson for us to learn, as it is in the interest of health that we eat bread made with mixed cereals.

The quantity of flour used, together with the handling of the ingredients, has much to do with the quality of the bread. For a firm, fine-grained loaf of bread, 3 to 4 times as much flour as liquid is used. For a coarse grain, from 2½ to 3 times as much flour as liquid is used.