

METHODS OF MAKING BREAD IN THE HOME.

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How much more economical home-made bread may be depends upon many conditions which we will not attempt to discuss here. But without allowing anything for labor, and presuming that the fuel used in baking the bread would be burned anyway for cooking, heating, etc., there is sufficient margin to warrant the economical housekeeper to seriously consider the matter. For the convenience of those who wish to try making bread the following long and short methods are given :

LONG FERMENTATION METHOD.

1 dry yeast cake.	2 tablespoons sugar.
2 quarts liquid.	2 tablespoons lard.
2 tablespoons salt.	Flour.

Note.—All measurements are level.

Preparation of Ferment.—Put a pint of water at a temperature of about 90 degrees F., into a bowl, drop the dry yeast cake into it and soak for half an hour; then stir in enough flour to make a thin batter, add one tablespoon sugar, and beat with a dover beater until well mixed and full of bubbles. Stand in a warm place (about 70 to 80 degrees F.) until light, which will take from four to five hours.

Preparation of Sponge.—When the ferment is ready put the rest of the sugar, salt and lard into a bread-pan, bring the rest of the liquid to 90 degrees F., and add it to the ingredients in the pan. Add enough strong flour to make a batter that will beat without spattering; add the ferment and beat until it looks smooth and elastic. This will probably take fifteen to twenty minutes. Cover closely and keep at a temperature of 70 degrees F., until light and spongy. This will take from nine to ten hours.

Preparation of Dough.—When the sponge is ready stir in strong flour until too stiff to use the spoon; then mix in more with a stiff-bladed knife or the hand until the dough no longer sticks to the fingers. Turn the dough out on the moulding-board to knead, leaving the pan quite clean. The dough should knead without flour being put on the board or hands; if it proves sticky return it to the pan and mix in more flour. Remember that while too slack a dough makes coarse-textured bread, too stiff a dough makes slow-rising bread which will dry out quickly. Knead lightly until the mass is elastic and velvety, the surface covered with a film of tiny bubbles, and a cut with a sharp knife shows the inside full of fine even bubbles and free from lumps or unmixed portions. Grease the bread-pan lightly with sweet dripping, warm both pan and cover if they are cold, put in the dough, cover closely, and keep in a warm place (about 80 degrees F.) until rather more than doubled in volume, or until a gentle slap with the tips of the fingers causes it to fall in. This will take from two to three hours.

Knead lightly in the pan for a minute to get rid of the larger bubbles and return it to rise a second time until double in volume. This will take from one to two hours.

Divide into loaves that will half fill the bread tins. Knead each piece only enough to get rid of large bubbles and smooth the surface and put it into a greased tin. Keep in a warm place (about 70 or 80 degrees F.) until doubled in volume, when they should have a bold, nicely-rounded appearance.