



Gammy's House Recipes

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Fail-proof White Bread

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp. dry yeast
1/2 cup warm water
1/2 tsp. honey
4 cups hot water
3 Tbsp. shortening
1 Tbsp. salt
3 Tbsp. honey
8 cups unbleached flour
butter

Stir the yeast into 1/2 cup warm water and add the half-teaspoon of honey. Let sit until you are ready for it.

In a large bowl, add the hot water, shortening, salt, and the rest of the honey. Stir until honey is dissolved and the shortening has melted.

Sift five cups of flour into the liquid in the large bowl and beat well with a whisk or wooden spoon. Let the mixture cool to lukewarm and add the yeast mixture. Again beat well. Add the remaining flour, one cup at a time. You want a dough that you can barely mix with a wooden spoon, held just above the spoon part.

Flour your kneading surface and dump the dough out onto the board. Flour your hands and begin kneading the dough. Add flour, as needed (no more than a half cup at a time). If it is sticky, add more flour, a bit at a time, under the dough, and on your hands. When it seems more "workable," let it rest on the floured board while you wash out the mixing bowl with hot water. Dry it and return to your kneading.

Knead the dough ball until it feels alive and springy. Grease the bowl and rub the top of the ball in this grease, then turn it over so the top is nicely greased. Cover with a warm, damp kitchen towel and let rise in a warm place until doubled.

When the dough is ready (two finger indentations on top remain for a minute), punch it down well. Grease two bread pans and form the dough into two loaves, leaving the tops smooth and the ends neatly tucked under. Again, cover them with your kitchen towel and let rise until nearly double. Preheat your oven to 400° F. Bake at 400° F for 45 minutes until the top is nicely browned and sounds hollow when you tap it with your finger.

Remove the bread from the oven and butter the tops to soften them and give them a beautiful sheen. Remove them from the pans and let them cool (if you don't have drooling family members hovering around begging and whining pitifully). We usually eat up a good chunk of hot bread as soon as it exits the oven.