

# Basic White Bread

6 cups all-purpose flour  
3 T sugar  
1 T salt  
2 T butter  
2 packages quick active dry yeast  
2 1/4 cups warm water (same temperature you'd use for a baby bath)  
Butter or margarine, melted

Mix 3 1/2 cups of the flour, the sugar, salt, first 2 T of butter and yeast in large mixing bowl. If you have a dough hook on your mixer, use that attachment. Add the warm water. Use your electric mixer or dough hook on low speed for 1 minute, scraping the sides of the bowl sometimes to incorporate everything properly. Switch to medium speed for 1 additional minute, remembering to scrape the sides of the bowl when needed. Stir in the remaining flour 1 cup at a time. This makes the dough easier to handle.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead it for about 10 minutes or until the dough is smooth and elastic. You can use the "window pane test" by taking a small ball of the dough and stretching it into a square. Keep on stretching until it becomes a thin film in the middle without breaking. The dough must be thin enough to pass light through it. If you can see light through it without tearing it at all, then your dough is properly kneaded. Place in greased bowl and it over to have the greased side up. Cover the bowl tightly with saran wrap and let it rise in warm place 40 to 60 minutes or until double. Be sure your bowl is large enough to allow the dough space to rise without touching the saran wrap.

While the dough is proofing, grease the bottoms and sides of 2 9x5x3 loaf pans.

Important: Dough is ready if an indentation remains when it is touched with your finger or thumb. When the proofing is complete, punch down the dough and divide it in half. Flatten each half with hands or a rolling pin, working it into a rectangle shape, 18x9 inches, on a lightly floured surface. Roll the dough up tightly, beginning at the 9-inch side, to form a loaf. Press with thumbs to seal after each turn. Pinch the edge of the dough into the roll to seal it. Press each end with the side of your hand to seal them. Fold the ends under loaf and place the dough loaf, seam side down, into your greased loaf pan. Brush the loaves lightly with the melted butter. Cover and let rise in warm place 35 to 50 minutes or until double. (This second proof is not necessary when using quick active dry yeast, but does make for a more nicely formed loaf). Preheat your oven to 425 °.

Place the loaf pans on a low rack so that the tops of the bread loaves will be in center of oven. Bake the loaves for 25 to 30 minutes or until loaves are deep golden brown and sound hollow when tapped. Remove from pans to wire rack. Brush loaves with butter if you'd like, then allow the loaves to cool before cutting into them (if you can!).