

# French Baguette

2 teaspoons active dry yeast  
1 Tablespoon honey  
1 ¼ cups warm water (approximately 110°)  
1 teaspoon finely ground sea salt  
2 ½ cups bread flour (all-purpose does work quite nicely as well)  
2 Tablespoons olive oil



Pour the water into a large mixing bowl and add the yeast and honey. Stir it slightly, then let it rest on the counter for 10 minutes. The yeast will begin to expand and bubble.

Once this has happened, add the salt then carefully add the flour and olive oil until you've formed a shaggy dough. You can use a wooden spoon or your hands – or a combo – taking care to not overwork the dough (over-kneaded dough can create loaves that are rather flat and chewy). You should end up with a round ball in the middle of the bowl.

Sprinkle a bit of flour and cover the bowl with a damp cloth, then proof your dough for about an hour or until it doubles in size. If your oven doesn't have a "proof" setting, just make sure that it is proofing in a warm spot.

When the dough is properly proofed, split it into two equal parts and sprinkle some flour onto your countertop or pastry board. Knead the first dough ball gently until it gets a bit firm, folding the dough over itself and adding a bit more flour if things are too sticky.

Press the dough into a rectangle with your hands, then fold the top of the short side over onto itself approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way down. Press the seam together, then roll the folded top over so that you are looking at a short-sided rectangle. Press the seams once more and then place your dough seam-side down onto your countertop/board. Carefully roll the rectangle into a baguette shape that is approximately 14" long. Set the first baguette onto your baking sheet and repeat the same steps with the second dough ball.

Use the tip of a sharp knife to make cuts into the top of the bread (no more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch deep).

Sprinkle a bit more flour on the top of the baguettes and let them rise another 30 minutes while your oven preheats to 450°. For a really solid, beautiful crust, place a pan halfway filled with water on the bottom rack of your oven to create some steam during baking.

Bake your baguettes for 20-25 minutes or until they are a solid golden brown and sound hollow when you tap on them. Recipe makes 2 baguettes.

*Adapted from Le Chef's Wife, The Bread Bible, and Mastering Bread*