

Irish Brown Soda Bread

MAKES ONE 7-INCH ROUND LOAF (CAN BE DOUBLED)

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MINUTES

START TO FINISH: 3 HOURS (INCLUDES COOLING)

Cookbook author Jeanne Lemlin managed to crack the code that has eluded generations of Irish immigrants: How to replicate Ireland's most popular kind of soda bread on this side of the Atlantic. The trick? Supplement American whole wheat flour with oats and wheat germ.

*

1-1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, plus additional for sprinkling

1 cup whole wheat flour

1/2 cup old-fashioned rolled oats

1/4 cup toasted wheat germ

1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 stick (4 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cut into bits

1-1/3 cups well-shaken buttermilk or plain yogurt

*

Put a rack in middle of oven and preheat oven to 425F. Lightly flour a baking sheet.

Whisk together flours, oats, wheat germ, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl.

Add butter and toss to coat with flour, then blend in butter with your fingertips or a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal.

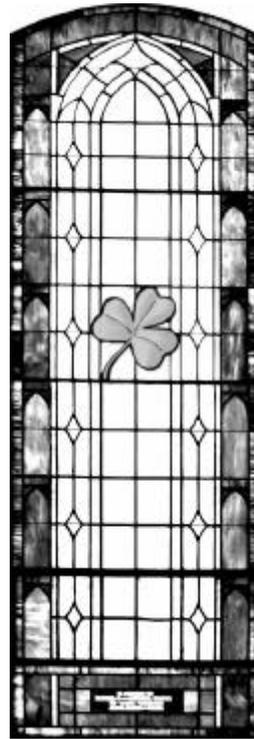
Add buttermilk and stir until dough is evenly moistened but still lumpy.

Turn dough out onto a floured surface. Keeping your hands wet, knead for 1 minute, sprinkling lightly with additional flour to prevent sticking; dough should remain soft.

Form dough into a ball and pat out into a 7-inch round on floured baking sheet. Sprinkle with flour and spread flour lightly over surface. Cut a shallow X in top of loaf with a sharp knife.

Bake bread until golden and bottom sounds hollow when tapped, 30 to 40 minutes. Cool on a rack for 2 hours before slicing.

Adapted from The Gourmet Cookbook (2004, Conde Nast Publications)



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