Sprouted Wheat Bread

By Gemie Martin

Sprouted wheat bread is very easy to make, although it does take some planning ahead. Other grains can be used, in conjunction with wheat, just make sure you are using berries that will sprout. Much of the barley, oats, and etc. sold in bulk in health food stores will not sprout. To buy some that will sprout would require ordering on line and would be quite expensive. Therefore, after trying unsuccessfully to sprout other grains, I have just stuck with wheat. You can roll the loaves in (or top them with) pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds or sesame seeds before baking. This recipe makes two loaves.

3 cups wheat berries

1 cup vital wheat gluten

2 teaspoons salt

3 Tablespoons instant yeast (I use SAF yeast)

3 Tablespoons honey

¾ cup water (at room temperature)

Step 1—Sprout the wheat. Two to three days before baking, soak the wheat berries covered in water for 12-24 hours. I usually soak them in a 2 quart wide mouth Mason jar which I then use to sprout them in, but you can divide them and soak them in two one quart wide mouth Mason jars. If you do not have sprouting lids for your quart bottles a piece of mesh screening and a rubber band can be used over a wide mouth jar. Rinse and drain them at least twice per day. I drain them upside down and tilted, in a dish drainer that has been put in one half of my sink. I cover them with a dish cloth so they don’t get too much light. When the wheat has sprouted and has tiny tails, the wheat kernels are ready to be ground. **Allowing the wheat sprout tails to grow longer will cause the kernel to malt, making the product you get much too moist to use.** Skip the final rinse.

Step 2—Grind the wheat. I use an inexpensive manual grinder (Norpro brand) that I bought online. You can use an electric meat grinder if you have one. A food processor may also be used, but care must be taken not to heat the wheat as you are processing it. Grinding your sprouts takes 5 or 6 minutes manually.

Step 3—Mixing and kneading the bread. Add the other ingredients. By now, you have a slightly sticky ball of dough. Turn out onto a work surface (mist work surface slightly with water if necessary) and knead by hand for 10 minutes. This gets the gluten developed. If you skip or shorten this step, your bread will not rise properly.

Step 4—Let it rise. Oil a bowl with vegetable or canola oil and place the dough in it turning once to lightly coat the top with oil. Cover it with a cloth or plastic wrap and let it rise at room temperature until it is 1 ½ times its volume in size (this takes about 45 minutes to an hour).

Step 5—Shape into loaves. Oil or grease your loaf bread pans. Knead the bread slightly and shape into loaves. Put the loaves into the pans, turning once to lightly coat the top of the loaf with oil. Let rise at room temperature until it is 1 ½ to twice its size. (This will take less time than it did to rise before.)

Step 6—Baking your bread. When you can see that the bread is almost ready to bake, preheat your oven to 350°F. If you are baking two loaves at the same time, leave space between them. Bake for about 15 minutes then cover the tops loosely with foil (shiny side out) to prevent them from over browning. Bake another 20-30 minutes until you can tap on the bread and it sounds hollow. (It should reach a temperature of 200°F internally.) Let the bread cool for a few minutes. Turn it out of the loaf pans onto a cooling rack. Let the bread set for half an hour before attempting to slice it.

Step 7—Enjoy your freshly baked bread alone or with your favorite spreads. Store loaves in the refrigerator or freezer in a plastic bag.

Adapted from a recipe entitled: “Sprouted Bread,” by Ted Weesner Jr. of The Boston Globe