

Leon County Cooks: The beauty of whole wheat bread

By Sherry Matney

About eight years ago my daughter-in-law, Kari, began making whole wheat bread. When we had a family get-together she always brought several loaves to share. Before long I found myself comparing the bread from the grocery store to Kari's bread and the "store bought" bread came up extremely short. One thing that makes the fresh bread so good is it is truly fresh, even down to the freshly ground wheat.

So within a couple of years I decided to give it a try. Getting started meant a major purchase of a mill to grind the flour and a dough hook to knead the bread. Both of these items can be found on the internet and can be shipped directly to your home. Buying the wheat is the greatest challenge because if ordered over the internet the shipping cost is as much as the price of the wheat. I am fortunate that my kids live in cities with retail stores that carry exactly what I need; so when we visit our kids I make a trip to the bread store and stock up.

Buying yeast and dough enhancer by the pound and storing them in the freezer has been a convenient way to be sure they are always on hand. This may not be the best plan but it has worked for about six years. Dough enhancer is an additive that helps make the bread pliable and keep it from crumbling.

In my opinion fresh whole wheat bread is delicious but that is only my opin-

ion. There are many folks, especially in these parts, that simply prefer white bread. However, white flour is so refined that the body handles it in much the same way as it does sugar. White flour does not have the nutritional value or the satiety of whole grains.

Generally speaking, the more food we eat in its natural state, as it is grown, the healthier it will be for us. For good health and weight control, eat more whole grains, fresh vegetables, and fruits. These complex carbohydrates should make up 65 to 80 percent of your total daily food intake.

Complex carbohydrates are basically those in wholegrain form such as wholegrain breads, oats and brown rice. Complex carbs are broken down into glucose more slowly than simple carbohydrates (white breads, sugar, etc.) and therefore provide a gradual steady stream of energy throughout the day.

The recipes given below are made with freshly ground flour, however purchased flour works very well, just be sure it is whole wheat. I use a Bosch Universal dough hook but any large mixer with a dough hook would work as long as the motor is large enough to work the dough.

Whole Wheat Bread (makes 5 loaves)

14 to 16 cups whole wheat flour
3 tablespoons dry yeast
3 tablespoons dough enhancer

6 cups warm water
2/3 cup vegetable oil
2/3 cup honey
2 tablespoons salt

Place 9 cups whole wheat flour in mixer with kneading arm (dough hook). Add dry yeast and dough enhancer. Mix well. Add water and mix for 1 minute. Turn off mixer, cover bowl and let dough sponge for 10 minutes. Sponging makes lighter bread and reduces kneading time. Add oil, honey and salt. Turn on mixer and add remaining flour, 1 cup at a time, until dough cleans the sides of the bowl. The amount of flour needed may vary. Knead 10 minutes. Lightly oil hands. Divide dough into 5 equal portions. Shape into loaves and place in greased bread pans. Let rise on countertop until double (about an hour). Preheat oven to 350 degrees and bake for 30 minutes. Immediately remove from pans; let cool on wire racks. Bread has no preservative so extra loaves should be stored in freezer, not refrigerator.

Diabetics or hypoglycemic may wish to substitute a natural sweetener for the honey, such as 1/2 to 3/4 cups unsweetened applesauce per batch.

Raisin Bread

Flatten 2 cups of dough into a 5X12" rectangle. Sprinkle with cinnamon and a handful of raisins. (add sugar if you are not on a sugar restricted diet) Roll up, beginning with the narrow edge. Pinch seam to seal. Place in lightly greased loaf pan. Let rise until double. Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Busy Day Cinnamon Rolls

Roll out 3 cups dough into a 12 X 16" rectangle. Brush with 1 tablespoon soft butter and sprinkle with cinnamon/sugar mix made from 1 tablespoon cinnamon and 1/3 cup brown or white sugar. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup raisins. Roll up tightly and pinch edges to seal. Cut roll in 15 1" slices using a piece of string or dental floss. Place in 9X13" baking sheet. Let rise until double. Bake 350 degrees 16 - 18 minutes.



Two batches of bread produce six loaves of bread, three large pizza crusts and 1 yummy apple braid. Sherry's Shots

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