



THE ROUND TABLE BASIC BREAD GUIDE

A BASIC LOAF: THE KEY INGREDIENTS

Basic bread is essentially made from 4 key ingredients: Flour, water, yeast and salt. Although you will find hundreds of different recipes and variations the ratios are nearly always the same – once you understand the underlying formula, you should be able to make and adapt any recipe:

FLOUR	YEAST	SALT	LIQUID (HYDRATION)
500g Strong Bread Flour	10g instant yeast / 30g fresh yeast	10g salt	300-400 ml <u>TEPID</u> water (you can swap in oil eg. 300ml water and 25ml oil)

- The Flour: You need to use Strong bread flour – strong bread flour is made from yeast with a high protein content, which means more gluten which is what gives it the texture. If you don't have any bread flour try our soda bread, yoghurt flatbread or naan recipes
- The Yeast: Yeast is what makes bread rise. It comes in various forms:
 1. Dried quick or instant yeast – the easiest yeast to use as it keeps for ages in the cupboard and you can add it direct to your dry ingredients without needing to activate it – use 7-10g per 500g flour (my recipes all say 10g but if you have bought yeast in 7g sachets 7g will be fine – don't open another sachet to make it up to 10g)
 2. Fresh – you can get it from some supermarkets, bakery suppliers and delis – you need to use 30g per 500g and it needs to be activated – crumble it into a small bowl with a pinch of sugar and dissolve it in a little warm water – leave it for 5-10 minutes until it is frothy – then add it to your flour along with your wet ingredients
 3. Sourdough starter – wild yeast (we won't go into sourdough at this stage)

Yeast needs warmth and moisture to work (it's perfect temperature for fermentation is 27*c but it will die at 60*) which is why the liquid you use should be tepid but not hot. If you don't have any yeast, make soda bread or our yoghurt flatbreads
- Salt: Adds flavor and controls the rise
- Liquid (Hydration): liquid might be in the form of water, milk, beer. Hydration (the amount of liquid you add) is usually between 60-90% in ratio to the flour (so 300-450ml for 500g flour) depending on the bread – our basic olive oil pizza dough uses 325ml (65% hydration) whereas our focaccia contains 400ml water and 50ml oil (95% hydration) – this is what makes it so soft and bubbly. Generally the more liquid you add, the softer and more bubbly your dough will be. If you have digital scales, measure your liquid by weighing it – 1ml water weights 1g

THE NEXT STEP: ENRICHED DOUGH – ADDING MORE THAN THE BASICS TO YOUR BREAD

Changing the flour used (eg wholemeal, malted or rye) adding any fat (milk, egg, butter, oil), sugar (sugar, honey, molasses), other liquids (beer, milk) or ingredients such as cheese, nuts, herbs and spices will soften the dough and add flavor but will also inhibit the yeast (making it work slower) so it will take longer to rise and prove – just give it time more time and use a little more yeast



THE ROUND TABLE BASIC BREAD GUIDE

THE STAGES OF BREAD MAKING

1	MIXING	Place the flour in a bowl and add the yeast and salt. Stir until well combined. Make a well in the centre and add the liquid (*check the temperature – it needs to be tepid – too hot will kill the yeast). Remember to weigh you liquid (1ml = 1g)
2	KNEADING	Kneading combines the ingredients and develops the gluten. Knead until the dough is smooth and an indent made with your finger springs back. There are 3 ways to knead: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knead by hand for 10 minutes (see our olive oil dough recipe). OR 2. Knead on a slow speed for 5 minutes by machine. OR 3. Use the no-knead folding method (see our focaccia recipe) – this is the way we make most of our bread as it is easy and mess free: Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl. Fold the dough back on itself, turn the bowl a quarter turn, fold it again – repeat 8 times. Leave the dough for 10 minutes, the repeat the folding process. Leave the dough again for 10 minutes, repeat the folding process. Leave for a final 10 minutes, repeat the folding process (4 TIMES IN ALL)
3	RISING	Place the dough in an oiled bowl and cover with a plate / damp cloth / oiled cling film so that it doesn't form a skin. Leave it to rise in a warm but not hot place until it has doubled in size.
4	KNOCKING BACK / SHAPING	Knock the dough back and shape it into a loaf. Knead in any fruits, nuts, herbs at this stage. *Pizzas and flatbreads can be rolled out and cooked at this stage
5	PROVING	Place the dough on an oiled / floured baking sheet, cover with oiled cling film and leave to rise until it is 1 ½ times the size (generally takes 40mins-1hr in a warm but not hot place)
6	GLAZING	Glaze the loaf (milk / beaten egg / egg white / four) and slash if you wish. Do this just before it goes into the oven
7	BAKING	Preheat the oven to 200*c. Bake until well risen and golden and the dough sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom (about 30 mins for a loaf, 15-20 mins for rolls). Cool on a rack