

## Bread Machines Gain Popularity

# Homemade Bread Without The Work

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff  
LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) —  
No time to bake bread?

Forget that excuse.

Now a bread machine does everything for you except measure the ingredients.

That's right. All you need is a couple of minutes to measure the ingredients into the pan; the appliance takes over by mixing, kneading, allowing the dough to rise, baking the bread and cooling it.

Measure the ingredients and set the timer before bedtime, and presto! Wake up to the smell of freshly baked bread.

"Now I don't have a problem getting my family out of bed in the morning. When they smell the bread, they want to get up," said a homemaker during a class on machine bread baking held recently by the Lebanon County Extension.

Another participant said, "At first I felt guilty. I wasn't spending any time making the bread and yet I ended up with homemade bread that tastes just like I spent hours slaving over it."

The bread machines are hot items on the market. Popularity spreads rapidly as happy users tell their friends and share a loaf of freshly baked bread with them.

There are more than 15 different models of bread machines from which to choose.

"Buying a bread machine is just like purchasing a car," said Arletta Schadler, extension home economist. "There are no right or wrong choices. It depends on what features you consider important and what fits your budget."

Prices range from about \$100 to almost \$400. Features include such items as a yeast dispenser, French or crisp cycles, time and rapid bake cycles, viewing window, and crust color control. Some machines yield traditionally-shaped loaves while others are cylindrical or square.

Most of those attending the bread machine workshop had already purchased a machine. Although there were numerous models represented, all the owners seemed pleased with their purchases.

The machines include recipes and several bread machine cookbooks are on the market, but the innovative cook will soon want to try different recipes or adapt her

own.

Here are some pointers from the workshop:

- Yeast in active-dry, rapid-style, quick rise, and rapid-rise may be used. Bulk or foil packets may be used but cake-type yeast is not recommended. If you buy yeast in bulk form, find out what kind it is and how old it is and label it. Yeast lasts four to six months if refrigerated.

- Do not buy more yeast than you will use within a few months. Check to see if it is active by combining ¼ cup warm water, 1 teaspoon sugar, and a pinch of yeast. Stir and set aside for a few minutes. A foam should form. If it does not, the yeast should be discarded.

- Bread or high gluten flour should be used for best performance, but you can use other wheat grains if you combine it with some wheat flour or add some gluten to provide the stretchy protein needed to cause the bread to rise.

- Yeast must have some sugar in order for fermentation to take place. You can use white or brown sugar, honey or molasses. You must make allowance for the liquid if you are substituting honey or molasses. Sugar substitutes do not work. Too much sugar will inhibit rising.

- Fat adds flavor and calories and improves the keeping characteristics. You may use butter, margarine, and oil interchangeably. French bread usually does not have fat and that is why it molds quickly.

- Liquids such as water, milk, yogurt, soft drinks, and fruit juice can be used interchangeably. Water gives a crisper crust while milk results in a softer crust.

- Other ingredients such as spices, fruit, nuts, seeds, cheese, chopped meats, and peanut butter may be added. If added in the beginning, ingredients such as raisins and chocolate chips will become chopped up and spread throughout the dough. Some models have a special fruit and nut cycle or beep when the ingredients should be added at a later time, which allows the raisins and chocolate chips to remain whole. Also, cheese will turn to liquid and give the bread a flavorful taste.

- Bread keeps fresher at room temperature. Refrigeration causes bread to become stale rapidly. Freezing keeps bread fresh for several weeks.



Mae Zimmerman of Bethel, left, peeps into a bread machine as Fran Campbell, center, and Janet Welder, both of Palmyra, examine the models on display.

For those cooks who have a bread machine, here are several recipes to use. If you would like more information about bread baking or bread machines, contact your county extension home economist.

### OATMEAL WALNUT BREAD

2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast  
2 cups bread flour  
1 cup whole wheat flour  
½ cup oatmeal, dry  
2 teaspoons salt  
¼ cup molasses  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1¼ cups water

Place the ingredients in the pan in the order recommended by your manufacturer.

For the 1½ -pound loaf, set the cycle at sweet bread if your machine has one. Use the regular cycle, not a turbo or rapid cycle if your machine had that choice. Near the end of the kneading cycle, add chopped ¼ cup walnuts.

### 100% WHOLE WHEAT BREAD

1½ teaspoons fast rise yeast  
2½ cups whole wheat bread flour  
1¼ tablespoons dry milk  
1 teaspoon salt  
1½ tablespoons butter  
1¼ tablespoons honey  
2 teaspoons molasses  
1 tablespoon gluten  
1 cup water

Have all liquids at tepid-baby bath temperature, about 100 degrees. Add ingredients to the machine in the order recommended by your manufacturer. Use the regular length cycle—not turbo or speed cycle. Set at white bread.

This bread should have extra kneading time to give the yeast and gluten a chance to produce a lighter loaf. Some machines have a whole wheat cycle. If yours does not, when the first kneading period is at an end, reset the machine and start again. If you have a clear button, push it long enough for it to be effective, then reprogram by pressing start. Makes a 1-pound loaf.



### FLEISCHMANN'S WHITE BREAD WITH VARIATIONS

1¼ cups cold water  
1¼ teaspoons salt  
1½ tablespoons butter  
3 cups bread flour  
2 tablespoons instant dry milk  
2 tablespoons sugar  
2 teaspoons rapid rise yeast

Combine ingredients according to manufacturer's directions. Process in regular, delayed or rapid bake cycle.

#### Recipe Variations

Light Wheat: Replace 1 cup bread flour with 1 cup whole wheat flour.

Cheddar Bread: Omit butter and decrease water to ¾ cup. Add 1½ large eggs with water. Add 1 cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese with flour.

Salt-free white bread: Omit salt and unsalted butter.

Oat Date Nut Bread: Add ½ cup old-fashioned rolled oats, ½ cup chopped dates, ½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon with flour.

Sweet Egg Bread: Decrease water to ¾ cup; add 1½ large eggs with water. Increase sugar to 3 tablespoons.

#### Pizza Dough:

Follow recipe for basic white or light wheat bread except omit sugar and replace butter with olive oil. Process in dough cycle. Remove dough. Grease appropriate pan; sprinkle with cornmeal. Roll or pat dough to fit pans. Top as desired. Bake at 400 degrees until finished.



Edwina Eckenroth of Palmyra samples bread made with bread machines.



Arletta Schadler, Lebanon County Extension home economist, compares the different kinds of machines and breads during a recent workshop on bread baking with bread machines.