CLASSIC CHALLAH BREAD

Ingredients:

Dough

3 cups of all-purpose flour
1 tbsp of sugar
2 ¼ tsp of instant yeast
½ tsp of fine sea salt
½ cup of water
2 eggs and 1 egg white
3 tbsp of butter, softened

Wash

1 egg yolk
2 tsp of water
poppy seeds, sesame seeds - optional

Directions:

In a large bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, yeast, and salt. Combine the water, eggs, and butter in a measuring cup. With your hand mixer, start with the beater setting. Add the flour mixture with the water mixture, making a soft dough.

Using your bread whisk, stir for a few minutes more, then knead for 6 to 8 minutes, until dough becomes smooth and elastic. Add more flour if the dough is too sticky, but avoid making the dough too dry.

Place the dough in a large greased bowl such as the bowl the flour was measured in. Cover the bowl with cling wrap and let it rise for 1 hour.

After rising, punch the dough down. Divide the dough into three equal pieces and braid a circle, placing it into the well-oiled Superstone® La Cloche. Proof for 45 to 60 minutes until the dough doubles in size.

Preheat oven to 375ºF.

Beat egg yolk with water, brush over loaf. Sprinkle with seeds (optional). Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Let the challah cool for 10-15 minutes, then remove from the loaf pan to cool completely on a cooling rack.

sassafras

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Superstone®

La Cloche Recipes

By Sassafras®

A WORD ABOUT LA CLOCHE®

The "La Cloche", or cooking bell, was used by the early Roman and Greek peoples as a portable oven for cooking breads, fish or meats. Food was placed on rocks in the sun and covered by the stoneware bell. Embers were placed around the bell, producing a very even heat which circulated around the food being cooked.

The modern version of La Cloche® will produce many varieties of delicious meals in your oven. The even heat qualities of natural stoneware, in combination with the domed top of La Cloche, create a continuous heat flow to properly cook foods. The stoneware produces fish and meats that retain their natural juices and breads with a crispy crust and light crumb.

James Beard, in a nationally-syndicated column, wrote: “The bread that I have been baking in it is nothing short of sensational."

USE AND CARE OF THE SUPERSTONE® LA CLOCHE

First, scrub, then rinse, the base of the baker with hot water and towel dry.

With a paper towel, wipe a generous amount of canola or vegetable oil across the bottom and sides of the base and place the base in a preheated 400°F oven for 30 minutes, then turn off the oven. Let it cool to room temperature, then remove the base. If there is still oil remaining, you may pour it off and use it for another purpose in the future.

When you bake your bread, lightly oil the bottom of the base (you will already have done this if baking bread right after seasoning) and sprinkle it with corn meal. Then bake the bread according to the recipe. For each bread you bake, follow this same procedure. Over time, the base will darken and develop a non-stick finish.

Our *Superstone® La Cloche* is made of all-natural stoneware. The stoneware material absorbs moisture from the dough, creating a delicious chewy crust and light crumb. You may use the *Superstone® La Cloche* in a conventional, convection or microwave oven, but not over a direct flame.

Do not add any frozen foods to the Superstone® La Cloche and never expose it to extremes in temperatures as it could break due to thermal shock. Be sure that the Superstone® La Cloche properly cools to room temperature before washing it.

Do not use soap on your Superstone® La Cloche. Rather, just scrub it with a wire brush or scouring pad under running water and let it air dry. Over time, the stoneware base will darken. This is a natural process and it means that your Superstone® La Cloche is probably seasoned, creating a natural non-stick finish.

CRUSTY COUNTRY LOAF

Ingredients:

1 package active dry yeast
1 teaspoon sugar
1 ¾ cups warm water (about 110º F)
5 cups hard wheat unbleached flour or all-purpose flour
¾ tablespoon salt

Directions:

Dissolve the yeast and sugar in ¼ cup of the water and let proof.

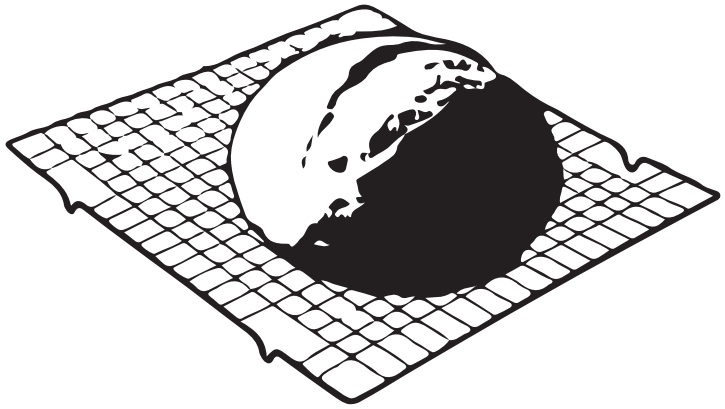
Combine flour and salt in a large bowl, add the yeast mixture and the rest of the water. Mix thoroughly, adding more water or flour if necessary. Turn out on a floured board and knead for 10-15 minutes until dough is soft, silky and elastic.

Return to bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk (approximately 45 minutes to one hour). Punch down dough, remove from bowl and knead a few times. Let rest for 5 minutes and form a ball.

Sprinkle bottom of La Cloche® dish with cornmeal and place the ball of dough into the well-oiled Superstone® La Cloche. Cover with La Cloche lid and let rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk (approximately 45 minutes to one hour).

Preheat oven to 450º F. Slash top of dough with a razor blade or a sharp knife and place cloche, with lid in place, in oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 400º F and continue baking for another 30-40 minutes, removing the lid for the final 10 minutes until the bread is golden brown in color and sounds hollow when tapped.

(Thanks to Chuck Williams of Williams-Sonoma for use of this wonderful recipe).



HOME-STYLE HONEY WHEAT BREAD

Ingredients:

1 package active dry yeast
2 cups warm milk (about 110º F)
¼ cup honey
3 to 4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2 cups stone ground whole wheat flour
1 tablespoon salt
2 tablespoons cooking oil or butter
Melted butter, or egg glaze

Directions:

Dissolve the yeast with the milk and honey in a large mixing bowl; let it proof until foamy. Add 1 cup all purpose flour, whole wheat flour, salt and cooking oil; beat until smooth. Stir in remaining flour, 1 cup at a time, to make a firm dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured board; cover and let rest 10 minutes. Knead until smooth and elastic, adding flour as needed to prevent sticking, about 10 minutes.

Place in a greased bowl and turn to coat the surface. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk (about 1½ to 2 hours).

Preheat oven to 400º F. Punch down the dough. Sprinkle bottom of the La Cloche dish with wheat germ. Shape dough into a round loaf and place it into the well-oiled Superstone® La Cloche. Cover with La Cloche lid and let rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk (about 1 hour).

Brush with melted butter or egg glaze. Reduce oven temperature to 375º F. and bake for 35-40 minutes, removing the lid for the final 10 minutes until the crust is golden brown and sounds hollow when tapped.