

BASIC FRENCH BREAD

(from Pam Anderson)

1/2 cup warm water
1 envelope (2 + 1/4 tsp) active dry yeast
1 cup cold water
4 cups bread flour
2 tsp salt



Sprinkle yeast over the warm water, let stand while you measure the other ingredients.

Add the flour and salt to the bowl of a food processor and process a few seconds to mix.

Add the cold water to the yeast mixture, and with the motor running, pour it into the processor, allowing it to mix until it starts to form a ball. Adjust with water or flour if it feels too dry or too sticky. Process for 30 seconds.

Remove it from the processor, knead it a few times by hand, and place it in a warm spot to rise until doubled in size (1 to 3 hours, depending on the type of yeast and temperature of your kitchen – mine doubled in only 55 minutes).

The dough makes enough for 2 loaves or 12 rolls. Shape them whichever way you like, and set them to rise for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until almost doubled in size.

Make a deep cross-cut on top of the rolls using scissors; slash the loaves with a blade or very sharp knife. Bake the breads in a 450F oven: rolls for 20 minutes, loaves for 40 minutes. I bake my breads covered by a roasting pan for 3/4 of the baking time, then remove the cover to get a nice dark golden crust.