

You will need either fresh yeast or dried yeast. The dried yeast can be very quick, so the rising times will be greatly reduced. Careful: you must not use the quantities of yeast for amount of flour that are indicated on the yeast package. They are exaggerated, if you follow them you will have a very strong yeast flavour and it might not even have risen that much. So you should half the quantities indicated.

Ingredients :

- 500 g of flour minimum (17,6 oz)
- 300 g of water (10,6 oz)
- ½ cube of yeast (21 g or 0,75 oz), or the equivalent of dried yeast (8g or 0,3 oz)
- 12 - 13 g salt (0,45 oz)
- a pinch of sugar

- Dissolve the yeast (if necessary, check the instructions on the package) in a small amount of the 300 g of water from the recipe with the sugar. Wait for 15 minutes, until the mixture goes bubbly.

- Add the rest of the water and whisk to add air.

- Add the flour and the salt while you are whisking or mixing by hand. You should get a slightly sticky dough, but humid enough that it doesn't tear. Depending on the quality of the flour you might even have to add a bit of water. You might have to adjust the proportions of this recipe to get a good consistency.

- Knead the dough for 15 minutes. This operation is not absolutely necessary, but makes the dough a bit more elastic. You should stretch the dough with palm of your hand, turn it around ¼ turn and make a ball, stretch again etc..... You can also throw it vigorously on the table.

- The first rise can be done in an oiled or floured bowl, protected from drafts in your warmest room. Cover with a damp cloth or plastic clingfilm (saran wrap).

The dough will double in volume (in 2 to 4 hours depending on the yeast and the temperature)

Put the dough on the table carefully so you don't tear it, push the air out of it and let it rest for ½ hour. Roll it out and fold it several times to get air into it, put it in a floured basket, or eventually on floured oven plate you are going to cook it on.

Let it rise (one to two hours, the second rise is a bit quicker). Before it has doubled in volume, put it on your floured oven tray, or even better, on baking parchment and make slits in the bread with a knife, or a razor blade diagonally 1-2 cm. deep. Put it into a very humid oven (you can pour a good bowl of water in the bottom of the oven for example on the drip tray, just before you cook the bread. The oven should be preheated to 240°C (464°F).

Bake it for ½ hour, ¼h at 240°C (464°F) then 1/4 h à 200°C (392°F).

Take the bread out, put it on a rack to cool so that it doesn't soften. The bread is perfect if you tap the bottom of the bread and get a hollow sound, when it is not hot any more....