

We visited the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village in Alberta last summer. They grow, harvest and mill wheat using traditional methods. It is very special to be able to use a grain that is harvested right where it's sold. This bread is great for trying out specialty flours, germs and brans from different grains. The lemon juice acts as a flour conditioner and helps to make things work well when improvising.

We're about to leave on a short trip, and I thought it might be nice for our farmsitter to have some really moist & robust bread to eat with many, many farm fresh eggs, so I baked a batch this afternoon. My husband and I ate a few slices from one loaf, but I kindly froze the other two loaves so we won't eat it all before we leave.

Hearth Bread

Ingredients:

2 c warm water (1 c + 1 c)
3 T honey (1 T + 2 T)
1 T yeast
¼ c olive oil
1 T molasses
1 T lemon juice
1 egg
4 c whole wheat flour (I use Red Fife)
½ c wheat germ (oat bran, wheat bran or some other grain flour)
2 t salt
1½ c unbleached flour
¼ c ground flax (I use toasted) (this is another ingredient that can easily be replaced with some other ground grain or seed)
½ c raw sunflower seeds
½ c raw pumpkin seeds
(½ c raisins or chopped dried fruit can be added if desired, just add in with the seeds)
1 egg for wash
sunflower seeds for topping (or rolled oats, sesame seeds, poppyseeds etc)

Directions:

Mix 1 c warm water, 1 T honey and 1 T yeast in the mixer bowl. Let proof.
Whisk in the remaining 1 c warm water, 2 T honey, ¼ c olive oil, 1 T molasses, 1 T lemon juice and the egg.
Gently whisk in 3 c whole wheat flour and ½ c wheat germ into the yeast mixture.
Let sit for 20 minutes.
Gently stir in 2 t salt, 1 c unbleached flour, ¼ c ground flax, ½ c raw sunflower seeds & ½ c raw pumpkin seeds.
Using the dough hook start to knead the bread on low for 2 minutes.
Add in 1 c whole wheat flour, continue kneading until the dough hangs on the hook.
Use the remaining ½ c unbleached flour if necessary to produce a firm dough.
Continue kneading for a full 6 minutes.
Remove the dough from the bowl, grease the bowl. Return the bread to the greased bowl, turning it so the top is greased as well.

Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a damp towel.
Let rise for an hour in a warm place, 'til doubled.
Punch down, divide into 3 equal pieces. Let rest, covered for 20 minutes.
Form into long loaves.
Place on a lightly greased baking sheet.
Cover with plastic or a damp towel to rise for another 40 minutes.
Preheat the oven to 375°
Whisk the egg into about a cup of tepid water.
When the bread has risen, brush the loaves with the egg wash.
Scatter the tops with raw sunflower seeds, and cut three slashes into each loaf.
Bake for 30 minutes.
Let cool before packaging.