

Dill or Rosemary Casserole Bread

This is an easy, no knead, bread that is always a hit. Make sure that all ingredients are at room temperature. I like to mix this up in the food processor using the dough hook but you can do it by hand or using an electric mixer. Mix ingredients sparingly - beating the flour too much will make the bread tough.

1 packet dry yeast
1/4 cup lukewarm water
1 cup creamy cottage cheese
2 Tb sugar
1 Tb butter
1 Tb chopped, dried onion
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp baking soda
1 unbeaten egg
2 1/4 - 2 1/c cups, unbleached flour
2 tsp dill seed (or more, to taste) or 3 -4 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

Coat the inside of a 2 qt., oven-proof bowl with butter and set aside

Dissolve yeast and 1 tsp of the sugar in lukewarm water in a small bowl. Cover the bowl with a moist paper towel and keep bowl in a warm place until the yeast is foamy and doubled in volume. 15 - 20 min.

Meanwhile, combine the cottage cheese, remaining sugar, onion, butter, dill, salt, soda, and egg. Stir in yeast. Add flour in half cup increments and stir just until flour is incorporated. The dough will be sticky but will spring back a little when you poke it with your finger. If it still feels wet and not elastic, add that last 1/4 cup of flour.

Coat your hands with flour and form the dough into a ball. Place the ball into the buttered bowl and roll the dough around until it is lightly coated with the butter. Cover the bowl with a moist towel and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume. About 1 1/2 hours.

Coat your hands with flour. Pick up the dough and squeeze it to pop all of the bubbles (my favorite part). Form the dough into a ball again and once more roll the dough around in the bowl to coat with a little butter. Cover with a moist towel once more and let rise until doubled in volume. About 1 hour.

During the last half hour place your oven rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake for 40 - 50 minutes. When done, the top of the loaf should look fairly dark brown and will sound hollow when you thump it with your finger. Let the loaf cool in the casserole on a rack for about 20 min. and then loosen the loaf around the edges with a flexible knife or spatula and invert on the cooling rack. The loaf should pop right out.

Turn the loaf right side up and rub the top and down the sides with butter and then sprinkle the top with coarse salt. Slice and serve. If there is any bread left over it makes amazing toast for breakfast.