

Seeded Dakota Bread

This is a favorite bread. This much-requested recipe, originally created at the Café Latte bakery in St. Paul, is what I consider the ultimate cracked wheat bread. It bakes into a light, even-textured bread, studded with nuts and seeds, that is excellent for toasting. It is a good recipe for novice bakers, despite all the extra additions. It is best made with an electric mixer since the dough is quite sticky. This is my version of the super-satisfying bread for breakfast.

Makes two 8 1/2-by-4 1/2-inch loaves

2 cups hot water
1/2 cup cracked wheat or bulgur
1 1/2 tablespoons (2 packages) active dry yeast
1/3 cup honey
3 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup raw sunflower seeds
1/3 cup hulled raw pumpkin seeds
3 tablespoons chopped raw almonds
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
1 tablespoon poppy seeds
1 tablespoon salt
1 cup whole wheat flour
4 1/2 to 5 cups unbleached bread flour

1. In the workbowl of a heavy-duty electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, pour the hot water over the cracked wheat. Let stand 15 to 30 minutes to soften slightly and cool. Sprinkle with the yeast and stir in the honey. Let stand until foamy, about 10 minutes.
2. Add the oil, butter, nuts and seeds, salt, whole wheat flour, and 1 cup of the bread flour. Beat hard until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the remaining unbleached flour 1/2 cup at a time until a soft, sticky dough is formed that just clears the sides of the bowl. This dough will remain quite sticky and heavy, yet soft. I usually use exactly 4 3/4 cups flour.

4. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until a soft and springy dough is formed, about 1 minute, adding 1 tablespoon of flour at a time as necessary to prevent sticking. Alternately, switch to the dough hook and knead by machine 2 to 3 minutes on low. The dough will have a nubby and slightly tacky feel. Be sure to keep this dough moist. Place in a greased deep container, turn once to coat the top, and cover with plastic wrap. Let rise at room temperature until double in bulk, about 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

5. Grease two 8 1/2-by-4 1/2-inch loaf pans. Deflate the dough by folding the sides into the center. Turn the dough out onto the work surface and divide into 2 equal portions. Shape into standard loaves; the dough will remain slightly sticky, but soft and pliable. Place in the loaf pans. Cover loosely with a clean dish towel and let rise at room temperature until doubled in bulk, about 45 minutes.

6. Twenty minutes before baking, preheat the oven to 375°.

7. Bake in the center of the preheated oven 35 to 40 minutes, until golden brown and hollow sounding when tapped with your finger. Remove from the pans to cool on racks before slicing.