

## **Buttermilk Whole Wheat**

Buttermilk is one of my favorite ingredients in baking. Whatever it is added to becomes ultra-tender and tasty. Whenever I want a simple loaf of bread for toast or sandwiches, or a gift for a friend, this is what I whip up. The addition of gluten is important for creating the proper texture of this whole wheat bread so it won't be too dense (gluten is usually in the section with the flour at well stocked supermarkets and health food stores). Store your whole wheat flour in the refrigerator. This bread, as quintessential as can be, is a delight to make from assembling the ingredients through the baking cycle. Be sure to place the bread machine on the counter in a place that is out of direct kitchen activity with plenty of room to open the lid, and some room around it for a work area and for steam to evaporate from the vents.

### **1 1/2-pound loaf**

1 1/8 cups buttermilk  
2 tablespoons light olive oil  
2 tablespoons maple syrup  
1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour  
1 1/2 cups bread flour  
4 teaspoons gluten  
1 1/2 teaspoons fine sea salt  
2 teaspoons bread machine yeast

### **2-pound loaf**

1 1/2 cups buttermilk  
3 tablespoons light olive oil  
2 1/2 tablespoons maple syrup  
2 cups whole wheat flour  
2 cups bread flour  
5 teaspoons gluten  
2 teaspoons fine sea salt  
2 1/4 teaspoons bread machine yeast

1. Measure and add the ingredients in the order listed in the recipe: Pour the buttermilk, oil, and maple syrup into the pan, then the exact amount of both flours, gluten, and salt. Don't worry about mixing anything, just add in layers. Add the yeast on top, making sure it does not touch the salt.
2. Set crust on medium and program for the Basic or Whole Wheat cycle; press Start.
3. During the first 5 to 10 minutes of the mix/kneading cycles, open the lid and check the consistency of the dough. Press Pause, then open the lid, and using the spatula, push the dough around to check in the corners to make sure all the ingredients are incorporated into the dough ball. With your fingers touch and press the dough. If the dough is wet and sticking to the sides and bottom of the pan, sprinkle in some flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, while the machine is kneading (be careful not to splash flour over onto the element because you will smell it later during the bake cycle) until the dough forms a ball that is smooth, firm, yet soft and springy to the touch. If it looks like a batter, you can add extra flour. If the dough is very firm and dry looking, maybe lumpy and not holding together, even a dry ball rolling around, add water 1 teaspoon at a time until the dough softens up a bit. Press Restart.
4. Set a cooling rack on the counter. When the baking cycle ends, you will hear the beeper signal. Carefully open the lid. Unplug the machine, and using heavy oven mitts holding the handle, carefully remove the pan up and out of the hot machine. Remove the bread from the pan by turning the pan upside down and shake a few times to release the loaf, taking care to make sure the handle is out of the way to avoid making a mess of the loaf as it comes out of the pan. Check to see if the blade has come off the shaft with the loaf and is still imbedded in the bottom of the loaf. Remove the blade by prying it loose with a chop stick or the handle of a heat-resistant plastic spoon or spatula while holding the loaf upside down in your other hand with an oven mitt. Place the loaf upright on the rack to cool to room temperature before slicing.