

# **EASY ARTISANAL BREAD**

Yield: 1 large loaf

## **INGREDIENTS**

3 cups white bread flour  
1 1/2 cups tepid water  
1/4 tsp instant yeast  
1 1/2 tsp fine salt

300g Olives, pitted  
Handful of fresh rosemary  
Olive oil

## **DIRECTIONS**

1. This recipe can be done by omitting the olives and rosemary & just baking a plain white loaf, which is just as good
2. Start by preparing all your ingredients. Although this recipe doesn't have many, it is always the most efficient and satisfying way to begin your bake. You are then able to flow through the mixing process with ease and little mess. If you decide to use olives, my advice would be to purchase them un-pitted, as they yield a better flavour. When pitting your olives be very careful not to leave a pit in with the ones you're going to add to your bread, no one wants a broken tooth!
3. Once all the ingredients are measured and weighed off, begin by adding your white bread flour to a large bowl. I generally use Eureka Flour for its consistent quality. Try and find stoneground flour, as this is better for your digestion and delivers a superior taste.
4. Add your fine salt, instant yeast and tepid water.
5. Pull the leaves off the washed rosemary stalks and add to the bowl, as well as your meticulously hand pitted olives. Do not rinse your olives, as you will lose valuable flavour. You can also chop the rosemary finer if you prefer.

6. I love to get my hands dirty while baking but I have found for this particular recipe, using a wooden spoon to bring the mixture together is much easier. As this bread is No Knead Bread, it is super simple. So all you do is bring the dough together so that the water absorbs the flour, and there you have it! Your work is done; you now let the natural process of the yeast perform its magic.
7. Once you have dough, pick it up out of the bowl and drizzle some olive oil at the bottom of the bowl, this will help you remove the dough easily when its ready to bake.
8. Then cover with plastic wrap, poke a few small holes in that - as always remember, yeast is a living thing and needs what you need; water, air, warm and food (and some love). Place in a warm corner of your kitchen or anywhere you'd want to spend the night, that's warm and cosy.
9. The beauty of this bread is it does the work for you. Allow it to develop for between 16 to 20 hours, don't stress too much about timing - the longer you let the bread prove the denser your bread will be, which is not necessarily a bad thing - it will still possess beautiful air pockets and they flavour will be more like that of a sourdough. Another great aspect to this bread is it's digestibility, it does not leave you feeling blotted with indigestion, a common symptom into todays poorly made bread.
10. Preheat your oven to 250 degrees celsius, then place your baking vessel in the oven to preheat - with a lid on. Having a lid is important as it creates the steam for you bread to bake from. You can use anything from a Le Creuset pot, a cast iron dish or pyrex. As long it retains heat and can withstand that high temperature. Allow it a good hour to preheat, you want it to be as hot as Hades!
11. Empty your dough onto a well-floured surface. Fold a corner of your dough to the centre and repeat with the other 3 corners. You will end up with a neat square parcel like above. Place the dough seam side down on a floured tea towel and slightly shape it, so it becomes a bit more round in appearance.
12. Now allow your dough to have a bit of a rest, you want to let the dough relax before it is thrown into a piping hot pot. This step you need to be as quick as possible, as not to loose heat from your oven or pot, but be careful not to burn yourself. Remove the pot from the oven and remove the lid. Take your dough that has been resting and flop it into the hot pot "seam" side UP. This is

imperative as they seam creates the perfect cracked crust.  
Replace the lid and return to the oven for 20 minutes.

13. After 20 minutes remove the lid of the pot and allow to bake for a further 15-20 minutes, allowing you bread to form a nice dark crust - this is where you get your caramelised flavour.
14. Remove from the oven, and allow to cool for 10 mins in the pot - no longer, as the bread will begin to sweat and leave you with a soggy bottom! Tip the bread out of the pot and place on a cooling rack until it is at room temperature (or if you can't resist that freshly baked bread smell, slice it and smother it with some salted butter).