

How To Make Irish Soda Bread

Enjoy this Delicious and Easy to Make Bread!

What is Irish Soda Bread?

Irish soda bread is what is called a quick bread. This means that it uses baking soda rather than yeast to make it rise. While it can be baked in an oven, it can also be fried in a frying pan.

Why make Irish Soda Bread instead of yeast-based bread?

I am very busy on my homestead. I prefer to make Irish Soda Bread because it is quick and easy. I don't have to punch it down. I don't have to wait for it to rise. If I'm out of bread in the morning, I can make a batch easily during my morning routine and eat fresh bread for breakfast!

HOW TO Highlights:

- Irish soda bread is quick to make because it is a "quick bread"!
- You can vary the ratio of whole wheat flour to white flour to find your perfect blend.
- Nothing tastes better than a fresh, warm farl with butter on it! Try it and you'll see!

What is my recipe?

I can give you an approximate recipe, but much depends on the types and ratio of flour that you use. Be prepared to be flexible! In order for it to be true Irish Soda Bread, it should only have four ingredients: Flour, Baking Soda, Salt, and Cultured Milk. (Buttermilk is used in Ireland, but I substitute Kefir in mine.)

1 cup whole wheat flour (I hand grind organic spelt)
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 tsp of salt
1 cup kefir (or buttermilk)

Directions:

Mix the dry ingredients together. Add the buttermilk or kefir and mix until blended.

Do not overmix. You may have a sticky dough. Add small handfuls of flour and mix until dough is not sticky and can be handled. Sprinkle with flour.

Put on a large floured cutting board or clean countertop and knead just a few times. Flatten with your hands and shape into a round. I cut mine into four pieces (called "farls") because they are more convenient.

Gently place each farl into the frying pan. I use a medium setting of the smallest burner on my gas range. To avoid burning them, place the farls back from the center. Cover the pan with a lid. Cook 10 minutes on the first side. Using the flipper, gently turn the farls and cook another 10 minutes. If you like, you can "finish" the edges of the farls a few minutes each.



This dough is still a bit too sticky...I'll add some flour!



I space my four farls away from the hot center.



Finishing the farls...almost ready for butter!

Now that you know....what's next?

To farl or not to farl? I prefer my soda bread in farls (that is Irish for quarter) because I only eat half a farl a day. I find them easier to handle and cut that way. If you want to leave yours whole, you can try that. Some like to bake theirs in the oven, too.

Would you like to learn more about soda bread, its history, and its variations? My recipe is adapted from one I found on a wonderful website by the Society for the Preservation of Irish Soda Bread. Check it out here: www.sodabread.info

I store my soda bread by wrapping it in a thick tea towel and putting it in a cupboard. One batch lasts me a week. It does get a bit dry by the last day. To remedy this, I simply rub a bit of butter on the bottom crust to soften it up once it is warm.