



RORY O'CONNELL'S RECIPE

Bastible Brown Soda Bread

A heavy cast iron pot, sometimes three legged, known as a bastible was the precursor to the oven in traditional Irish cottage kitchens. The pot was hung over or placed in the turf fire depending on what was being cooked within. I use a heavy cast iron lidded casserole and place it in the oven for a delicious result with this bread.

INGREDIENTS

225g wholemeal flour*
225g white flour*
Level teaspoon of bread soda
(bicarbonate of soda)**
Level teaspoon of salt
c400ml buttermilk approx

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200c / 400f / gas 6

Mix the flours in a large bowl. Add the salt and carefully sieve in the bread soda. Lift the flour with your fingers to mix and add air to the dry ingredients.

Make a well in the centre and pour in most of the buttermilk. With your hand open like a claw, mix in a circular fashion the mix in the flour. This will take only a matter of seconds. The dough should be soft but not sloppy. Put some flour on the worktop and gently turn out the bread from the bowl. Shape into a neat round loaf, about 3in / 5cm cm thick. Do not knead the bread. Cut a deep cross in the top of the bread and gently pierce each quarter created by the cross. Place in a pre-heated heavy cast iron casserole that had been lined with a disc of parchment paper and pop on the lid. Put the casserole in the oven and cook for 40 minutes. Remove the lid and cook for a further 5 minutes. Remove the bread from the casserole - it should sound hollow when tapped on the bottom. Cool on a wire rack.

* You get the best results with both white flour and wholemeal flour from a health food store (for example Ekoplaza). You could use 'tarwemeel volkoren' and 'tarwebloem' both by Demeter.

** Health food stores also sell bicarbonate of soda (ie 'zuiveringszout' or 'baksoda').

Prepared & served by chef Rory O'Connell, co-founder of the Ballymaloe Cookery School with Elisabeth Kamphuis on March 15th 2019 in Splendor, at St. Patrick's Festival Amsterdam, the annual Festival of Irish culture.