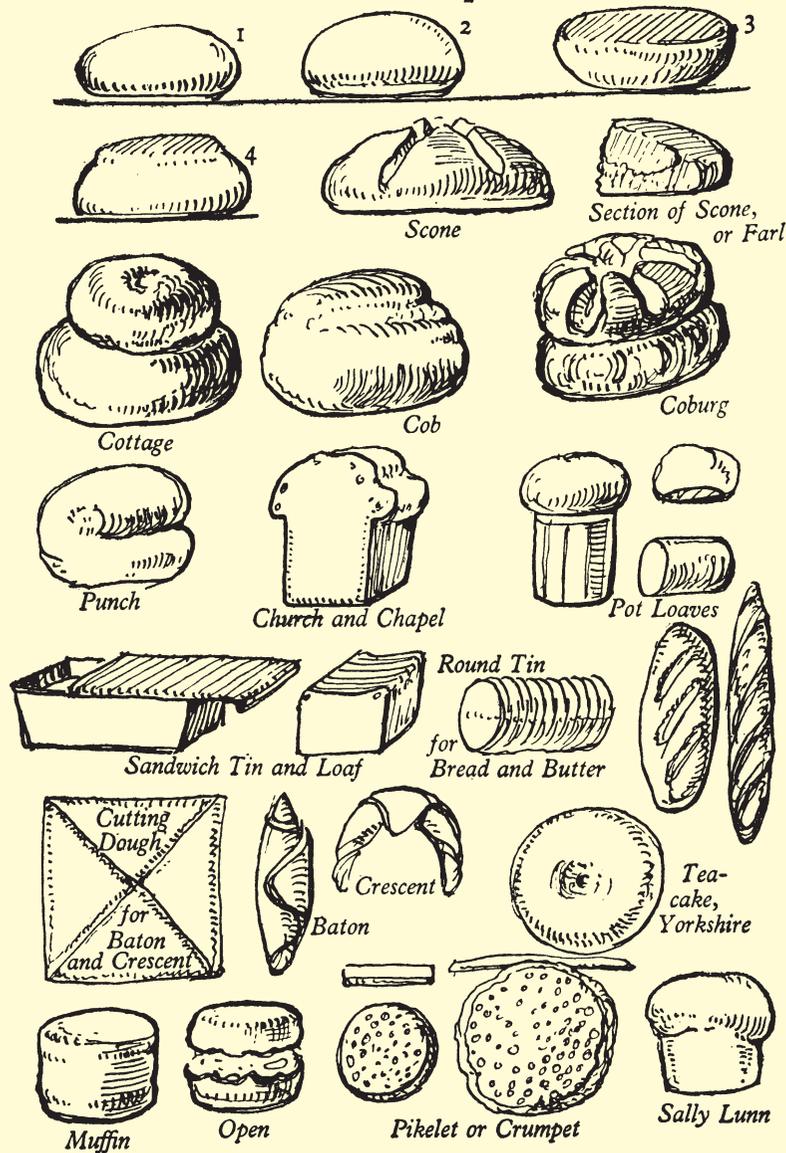


Bread Shapes



1, 2, 3, 4: The bakestone is an early form. It is cooked till it rises; then turned to complete baking. Therefore the top crust is smaller than the lower. It was this type of "trencher bread" that was cut to provide two "plates" for the mediaeval dinner table.

Bread shapes from Dorothy Hartley, Food in England, 1954

Bread Making

'Without bread all is misery. The scripture truly calls it the staff of life: and it may be called, too, the pledge of peace and happiness in the labourer's dwelling'

William Cobbett : Cottage Economy, 1822.

There are **four essential ingredients** in the making of bread:

Flours available are usually blended from different varieties of grains, often from different regions and countries. The differing varieties contribute colour, flavour and strength to the flour and may be blended for different purposes such as bread, biscuit and cake making. Flours from one source, eg. English grown bio-dynamic wheat, may be used to make specific baked goods such as biscuits and more dense bread. Imported wheat from North America may be used where a lighter more risen bread is required.

Gluten is a complex, elastic protein. The gluten in wheat flour traps carbon dioxide released by the fermenting yeast causing the dough to expand. Rye contains protein similar to gluten, but without the elasticity of wheat gluten, giving it a sticky characteristic but without the elasticity of wheat. Protein content does not relate to gluten content. Gluten provides structure to the loaf.

Yeast is a fungi. When added to flour and water it feeds on the sugars in the flour, causing fermentation. The process of fermentation releases carbon dioxide which aerates the mixture. Yeast requires warm but not hot conditions to enable it to ferment. The high heat of the baking process kills the yeast and halts fermentation.

During the rising process and once the dough has risen, avoid rough handling and exposure to draughts as this will cause collapse of the air bubbles.



Illustration by Sally Seymour from Self-Sufficiency, Faber & Faber 1973

Dried or fresh bakers yeast gives a consistent result. Natural leaven is less reliable but fun to experiment with. There is some debate around the production of bakers yeast, its derivation and manufacture. Organically manufactured bakers yeast is available. Food purists may like to experiment with natural leaven which is entirely under the control of the baker. Any flour mixed with water and left in a warm place will begin to develop yeasts which release carbon dioxide. The resulting 'leaven' may then be used as a raising agent in the bread-making process.

Water used needs to be as pure as possible. Tap water should be avoided. Water for bread-making is heated to around blood temperature before being added to the dry ingredients. The warmth from the water and the sugars in the flour activate the yeast causing carbon dioxide to be released.

Salt is used in the bread-making process to bring out the flavours in the flour, to aid the keeping quality of the bread and to add structure. Experiment with the quantity used as recipes often suggest as much as one tablespoon per 1 kg of flour. Use pure, additive-free salt, not table salt.

Additional, optional ingredients which may be added to the dough: Experiment with different flavours and textures to complement the flour used and to contribute specific characteristics and properties.

- Fats: butter / oils / cheeses
- Sugars: honey / syrups / raw sugars
- Textures and flavours: nuts / seeds / grains / pulses / fruits / vegetables / olives / dried tomatoes / spices / herbs
- Liquids: dairy, nut and bean milks / beer / cider / juices



Basic bread recipe:

- 1kg flour
- 1 tsp salt
- walnut-sized piece fresh yeast (or 1tsp dried yeast, or 1 cup leaven)
- 1 pint warm water

*Susie Hammett
Gate Farm, April 2016*

Some recipe variations

More possible ingredients

- left-over cooked rice and grains
- sautéed vegetables - mushrooms / onions
- stronger flavoured cheeses - eg. grated mature cheddar

Sweetened bread

Fortify the basic bread recipe with any or all of the following:

- egg / milk / butter / oil
- sugar / honey
- dried fruit / diced or grated apple

Reduced-wheat bread

Replace half (eg. 500g) of the wheat flour in the basic recipe with:

- 200g potato flour
- 200g tapioca flour
- 100g soya flour

Gluten-free Hopper Bread

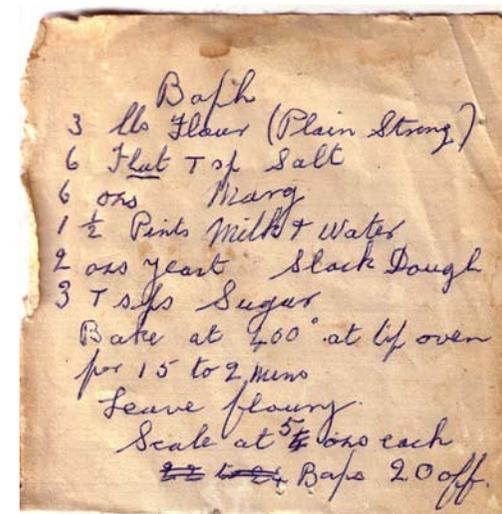
This Sri Lankan street-food uses yeast and rice flour to make a kind of cross between a pancake and a thin English crumpet.

- 300g rice flour
- 1/2 tsp dried / 1 tsp fresh yeast
- 1 egg
- oil for frying
- soya milk and warm water to mix (half and half)

Dissolve yeast in 1 tablespoon of warm water and whisk in egg and some soya milk. Add warm water to give tepid temperature. Whisk in rice flour, adding soya milk and water as required to achieve consistency of double cream. Leave to stand in warm place for about 1 hour until yeast is bubbling.

Pre-heat a pan with a little oil and when hot pour in batter to cover base like a pancake. Cover pan immediately and cook between one and two minutes.

The technique relies on steam to cook the batter which must be retained by the lid. Ready to eat, Hopper Bread is traditionally used as a wrap or goes well with butter like a crumpet.



Grampa Joe's bakery recipe to make 20 baps.