



James Beard's Cheese Bread

Yield: 2 loaves

- 1 (1/4 oz.) package active dry yeast
- 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1-3/4 cup warm water 100 to 115 F degrees approximately
- 5 to 6 cups all purpose flour, as needed
- 1 Tablespoon salt or slightly more to taste
- 1/4 cup softened butter
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco hot sauce
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese or slightly more to taste
- 3/4 cup shredded Gruyere or Swiss Emmenthaler cheese

Dissolve the yeast with the sugar in 1/4 cup of the warm water and allow to proof. In a large bowl, mix 4-1/2 cups of flour and the salt. Make a well in the center and add the remaining 1-1/2 cups warm water, the butter, hot sauce and yeast mixture. Stir with a wooden spoon or spatula or with your floured hands until the dough is well amalgamated. Turn out on a heavily floured board, use about 1/2 cup flour and knead for 10 to 12 minutes or until dough is smooth, elastic, and satiny in texture and all flour on the board is absorbed; add flour as you need it. Place the dough in a buttered or oiled bowl and turn to coat on all sides. Cover with a towel; let rise in a warm spot until doubled in bulk, 1-1/2 to 2 hours or slightly more.

Punch down dough, turn it out on a lightly floured board and knead in the cheeses. When thoroughly blended, cut the dough in half and let rest for 10 minutes; then roll

each half into a rectangle about 11x6-inches and let rest for 2 to 3 minutes more. Roll each rectangle up, pinching the edges as you do so, and tucking in the ends so that the loaf measures about 4-1/2 x7-1/2 inches. Place dough in two well buttered 8x4x2 inch tins and let rise in warm spot until bread reaches the top of the tin or slightly higher or has more or less doubled in size.

Bake on the center of the middle rack in preheated 375 degree F oven for approximately 30 minutes or until loaves sound hollow when removed from the tins and tapped with the knuckles on both top and bottom. Bake directly on the oven rack, without the tins, for a few minutes to firm the crust. Cool the bread on racks before slicing.

(Please check the Cook's Note for Mixer Method)

Notes from Original Recipe:

*instead of butter, use 1/3 cup peanut oil or olive oil

*Use fresh Parmesan or Romano only-a little over a cup or use a mixture of the two.

*Use shredded sharp Cheddar instead of the Gruyere cheese

*Bake as one loaf in a 10x4-1/2x3 inch pan, which will make a thicker more concentrated loaf and will take slightly longer to bake.

Recipe by: James Beard, *Beard on Bread*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1973

“This rather unusual bread is delicate and moist, with an intriguing bouquet and flavor. It is ideal for sandwiches, it toasts extremely well, and it makes excellent crumbs when a cheese flavored topping for certain dishes is called for. You may, of course, combine the crumbs with a little more grated Parmesan cheese.”

Cook's Note: Mixer Method: I prepared this recipe in my mixer and used 5 cups Bread Flour. It only required about 2 minutes to form the bread dough and 5 minutes kneading by machine. I did not add additional flour since my dough was smooth and elastic in texture. My first raising was 1 hour. Then I returned the dough to my mixer to add the cheese. I used grated Parmesan and Sharp Cheddar cheese.

About the Recipe: This recipe uses a double rising to create soft textured bread that is perfect to use for sandwiches. The two golden brown loaves of bread have delightful aroma with a mild cheese flavor. They are picture perfect loaves of bread that will enhance any meal.