



ANSON MILLS

Irish Soda Bread

Yield

One 6-inch round loaf

Time

15 minutes to make, about 40 minutes to bake

Baking Notes

Take the old baking soda you have, put it in the fridge, and splurge on a new box to bake with. The soda for this bread must be fresh and well distributed—it's not getting any extra help from baking powder. It is partly for this reason that we ask the pastry flour, soda, and salt to be sifted. Once the dough is mixed, work quickly to get the shaggy mass into the oven.

If you don't have a small Dutch oven, bake the bread in an 8-inch cast-iron skillet. The crust will be thicker, but the crumb will be fine. If you are baking in a Le Creuset Dutch oven with black handle on its lid, be sure to protect the knob from the heat by wrapping it with aluminum foil.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a digital kitchen scale; a small bowl; a 2-quart enameled cast-iron or regular cast-iron Dutch oven, or an 8-inch cast-iron skillet; a fine-mesh strainer; a large mixing bowl; a whisk; a rubber spatula; a plastic dough scraper; a sharp paring knife; an instant-read thermometer; a wire rack; a clean tea towel; and a spray bottle filled with water.

Ingredients

2.5 ounces golden raisins
4 ounces hot strong black tea
2 teaspoons unsalted butter, room temperature
7 ounces Anson Mills Colonial Style Fine Cloth-Bolted Pastry Flour, plus additional for the work surface
1 teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
7 ounces Anson Mills Antebellum Style Rustic Coarse Graham Wheat Flour
1 tablespoon sugar
11 ounces buttermilk, room temperature

Directions

1. In a small bowl, combine the raisins and tea and set aside. Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 450 degrees. Coat the inside of a 2-quart enameled cast-iron or regular cast-iron Dutch oven, or an 8-inch cast-iron skillet, with the butter and set aside.

If you are baking in a Le Creuset Dutch oven with black handle on its lid, wrap the just the knob with aluminum foil.

2. Turn the pastry flour, baking soda, and salt into a fine-mesh strainer set over a large mixing bowl and sift the ingredients into the bowl. Add the graham flour and sugar and whisk well to combine.

3. Flour a clean work surface. Drain the raisins, shake them dry, and toss them into the dry ingredients with your fingertips. Make a well in the dry ingredients and pour the buttermilk into it. Using a rubber spatula, lightly and quickly fold the wet ingredients into the dry. As soon as the dry ingredients are evenly moistened, use a plastic dough scraper to turn the dough out onto the floured work surface. Flour your hands, shape the dough into a round about 5 inches wide at the base, and quickly transfer it to the prepared baking vessel. Using a sharp paring knife, score a f-inch-deep cross into the dough, cover if using a Dutch oven, and slide into the oven. If using a Dutch oven, bake for 20 minutes, lower the oven temperature to 400 degrees, and continue to bake until the bread is lofted and brown and tests 190 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, about 20 minutes more. If using a skillet, bake for 15 minutes, lower the oven temperature to 400 degrees, and continue to bake until the bread is well risen and brown and an instant-read thermometer shows 190 degrees, about 20 minutes more.

4. Turn the bread out onto a wire rack and drape it with a clean tea towel. With a spray bottle filled with water, lightly mist the towel with water and let the bread cool completely—but then gobble it up fast with plenty of butter. Irish soda bread makes phenomenal toast and may be wrapped in plastic and then foil and frozen for up to 2 months.