

## Favorite Bread Recipes for World Communion

Celebrate bread, one of the central symbols of our faith! It's fun to have a variety of flavors and colors available on World Communion Sunday as a witness to our diversity. You could have Presbyterian Women make it and bake it, or the youth group (as part of a lock-in experience), or a Sunday School class meeting on Saturday (or even on Sunday morning, for Irish Soda Bread), or the confirmation class (as part of their last meeting before being confirmed). You could also include corn bread or tortillas from Latin America, *nan* from India, and *injera* from Ethiopia, or you could ask your local immigrant community to provide authentic breads from their traditions. These four recipes will help you get started, and give you a good variety of textures and colors, from white to tan, brown, and almost black.

If you are going to cut the loaves into small pieces for intinction, you can simply bake them in loaf pans or on cookie sheets. But if you want an attractive display for the communion table, these instructions include directions for shaping the loaves. Double (or multiply!) any of these recipes, depending on how much bread you need. Except for Irish Soda Bread, you can also mix, knead, and form the loaves on Saturday and then keep them in the refrigerator overnight. On Sunday morning, warm them up to room temperature for an hour, bake them, and then carry them straight to the communion table so that the whole sanctuary smells of fresh bread, still warm from the oven.

These recipes are listed in order, according to the time it takes to make them. If you have enough hands and bowls and ovens, you can make them all in a single morning or afternoon. Start with the slowest recipe, Frontier Whole Wheat. Once it's mixed and rising, move on to the German Rye, and so on. If you run short on time, any of these loaves can be baked at 400 degrees, but keep a careful watch!

**Frontier Whole Wheat Bread** -- double-rising bread from our nation's—and my family's—history. Makes two light-brown loaves. Allow four and one-half hours, start to finish.

Proofing the yeast: 1 tablespoon yeast

¼ cup warm water

1 tablespoon honey

Loaf: 2 ½ cups hot water

¾ cup brown sugar

1 tablespoon salt

¼ cup vegetable oil

½ cup wheat germ

2 eggs

3 cups whole wheat flour

4 cups (plus a bit) white flour

Combine the ingredients for 'proofing' the yeast in a small bowl. Set aside so the yeast can start to rise. Mix all other ingredients except for the two flours in a large bread bowl. Add yeast mixture. Stir. Mix in the whole wheat flour, then the white flour. Turn out the dough onto a floured bread board. Knead for ten minutes, adding more white flour as needed. Let rise in a warm place until doubled (about 1 ½ hours). Punch down, knead enough to get the bubbles out, cut into halves, and shape into two loaves. One loaf can be a slightly flattened ball, a hearth loaf. The other half of the dough can be split into thirds, rolled into inch-thick ropes, and braided. Place on slightly greased cookie sheets. Let rise in a warm place until doubled (about 1 ½ hours). Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake 30 to 45

minutes (check after 30, or after 25 for braided loaf) until hollow-sounding when thumped on the bottom.

**German Rye Bread** – a heavy, single-rising black bread, with lots of ingredients and a complex flavor. Makes two round loaves. Allow three hours, start to finish.

Liquid ingredients: 2 cups water

1/3 cup molasses

2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon salt

Dry ingredients: 3 cups white flour

2 tablespoons yeast

¼ cup cocoa powder

1 tablespoon caraway seeds

½ teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed

½ teaspoon espresso powder

Rye flour: 3 to 3 ½ cups rye flour

Heat water, molasses, butter, sugar, and salt in a saucepan until butter is melted. Place in refrigerator to cool until lukewarm, maybe ten minutes. Combine dry ingredients, except for rye flour, in a large bread bowl. Add lukewarm liquid to dry ingredients. Mix well for five minutes. Stir in rye flour, one cup at a time, to make a soft dough. Turn out the dough onto a floured bread board, knead for five minutes. Cover and let rest for twenty minutes. Punch down, divide into two round loaves, brush lightly with cooking oil, and dust with white flour. Then slash the tops (three or four parallel slashes, two cross slashes to make an X, or five curving cuts like flour petals). Allow to rise in warm place for 45 to 60 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake for 25 – 30 minutes, until hollow-sounding when thumped on the bottom.

**English Cottage Loaf** -- a soft, single-rising white loaf. Makes one loaf. Allow two hours, start to finish.

Loaf: 2 ½ cups white bread flour

1 ½ teaspoons salt

1 tablespoon yeast

1 cup water

5 tablespoons softened butter

Glaze: 1 egg

1 tablespoon water

Mix all loaf ingredients together to make a soft dough. Knead for five minutes. Place in a lightly-oiled bowl and let rise in a warm place until doubled (about one hour). Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Turn out the dough onto a floured bread board. Cut off one-third of the dough to make a small ball, and make a larger ball out of the remaining two-thirds. Knead them each until smooth, just a minute or so. Place the larger ball on a greased cookie sheet, flick a little water on top of it, and cut an X across the top. Place the smaller ball on top. Flour the handle of a big wooden spoon, push it down through the

center of both balls to the bottom, and then remove. This sticks the two balls together into a single round loaf with a 'cap.'

Slash the sides of both layers 6 or 8 times, or nip the sides with scissors. Mix the glaze ingredients together, and lightly brush onto loaf. Bake 30 minutes until golden brown and hollow-sounding when thumped on the bottom. Cool before cutting.

**Irish Soda Bread** -- a coarse, brown, non-yeast bread. Makes one round loaf. Allow one hour, start to finish.

Dry: 4 cups whole wheat flour  
2 cups white flour  
1 ½ teaspoons salt  
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda  
Liquid: 2 ¼ cups buttermilk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bread bowl, mix dry ingredients. Make a well in the center, and pour in the buttermilk. Mix thoroughly into a heavy, stiff dough. Shape into a round ball, then flatten to two inches thick. Slash a cross on top. Bake 35-40 minutes until top begins to brown, and it's hollow-sounding when thumped on the bottom.

If you use these recipes, please let me know who helped make them and how your experience was. Thanks!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce".

Bruce Whearty  
[bruce.whearty@pcusa.org](mailto:bruce.whearty@pcusa.org)  
1-800-728-7228, ext. 5157  
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