

This is a silly easy bread to make; the fun is in putting it together once you've got dough in hand. **NOTE:** You can mix it by hand, in a mixer, or in the bread machine.

So follow along here and we will make some lovely bread.

First, the dough:

1 cup (8 ounces) milk
1/4 cup (4 tablespoons, 2 ounces) butter
3 tablespoons (1 1/4 ounces) sugar
2 teaspoons salt
2 large eggs
2 teaspoons instant or active dry yeast
4 1/4 to 4 3/4 cups (1 pound to 1 pound, 4 ounces) [King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour](#)
2 tablespoons (3/4 ounce) [potato flour](#) or [1/4 cup mashed potato flakes](#) (These ARE Secrets!)

OK Put the butter in a big bowl. Bring the milk to a simmer and pour it over the butter, either in a mixing bowl or in your bread machine bucket
(see photos on the right side) then set the machine on the dough cycle.



Let the whole business cool to lukewarm.

NOTE: You can add the sugar and salt while you're waiting.
Once the milk is just slightly warm to the touch, add the eggs, yeast, and 3 1/2 cups of the flour and the potato flour or flakes.

Hit "start" on the bread machine or start the mixer (with bread hook) and begin mixing.



NOTE: Learning moment here: I have intentionally put in less flour than the recipe calls for. This is a good habit to get into, for two reasons. It forces you to interact with your dough as it develops, since you **KNOW** you are going to need to add more flour...
You just do not know how much.

Moreover, I cannot tell you how much more, because I am not in **YOUR** kitchen. I do not know if it is hot and dry where you live, or cool and wet, or hot and wet, or...
and **ALL** can make a difference.

The other reason is that too much flour is not good for the quality of your bread. Too much flour means the dough will be stiff, take much longer to rise, and will likely be dry and crumbly when baked, instead of tender and yummy.

The answer? You need to use (and get to trust) your hands.
As the dough mixes and comes together, the first move on your part is to scrape the edges of the bowl or bread machine bucket...



Until everything you have put in is fully incorporated. By this time, it will have been mixing for about 3 or 4 minutes...and it is Time to Touch the dough. **NOTE:** If your finger comes away with dough sticking to it, you will need to add more flour (at least for this style of dough).



Add 2 tablespoons at a time, and let the dough mix until the flour disappears before you touch it again to see if it needs more. You may need a quarter cup more flour (two additions), or more; it just depends. Once your dough is smooth and soft but not sticky, cover it and let it rise for either the rest of the bread machine's cycle, or in the mixing bowl.



If you are new to bread making and not sure of how to know when the dough is ready to work with, I think my 8-cup measure idea is still as good as it ever was: [Grease the inside of an 8 cup glass measuring cup, put the dough in it, cover it up, and set a timer.](#)
I set this one for 55 minutes.



When it doubles, you are ready to go.

While the dough is rising, you can mix up the filling. For the herb butter, you can follow the recipe, or use this part of the recipe to put your own spin on things.

The filling recipe calls for:

- 1/2 cup (1 stick, 4 ounces) unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon caraway or chopped fennel seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon grated onion
- 1/4 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (next time I make this, I'm going to use smoked salt)
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (for the faint of taste bud, try paprika instead)
- 1 clove garlic, minced



I did one loaf as the recipe specified above, using one of my absolute favorite kitchen toys: mini silicone spatulas. I use them for getting peanut butter or shortening out of their containers (also that last little bit of Greek yogurt), stirring chocolate, and things like this. Cannot live without 'em.

Then I did another version with Herbes de Provence and 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, but you can really go to town with the filling.

For sweet, you could mix maple or cinnamon sugar (1/4 cup) and soft butter for spreading in between. Nutella, Chocolate Schmear, Almond Filling, Baker's Cinnamon Filling.

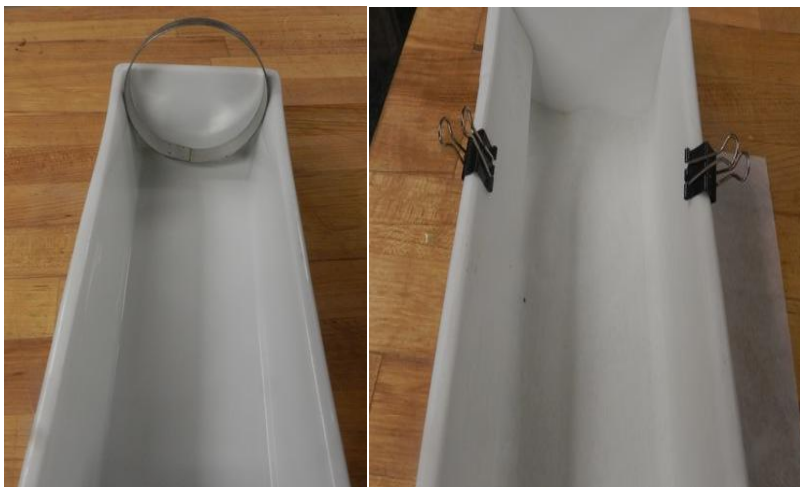
Really, anything that has a spreadable texture that you can imagine will be just fine.



NOTE: We are now going to cut the dough in circles, spread it with butter, fold the circles in half, and make a loaf out of it. The original recipe called for just piling the circles on top of each other, overlapping them, sort of like this:



Which worked OK, but wasn't quite as pretty as my next try, when I reached for my Tea Loaf Pan, parchment paper, and a couple of binder clips, which are another indispensable bit of equipment on my station. It just so happens that my English Muffin Rings are the **exact** right size to cut circles for this pan...though I HAVE used wine glasses before too.



Anyway, I always line my baking pans with parchment. I never know if what I'm baking will be so beautiful that I'll want a picture of it, (haha) and there's simply no substitute for getting things out of the pan in one piece.

Further, the binder clips do not care if they are going for a ride in the oven; they are all metal. There is nothing worse than having the edge of the paper flop down into your brownies or cake batter, and the clips keep things where they belong.



OK Once the pan is full, cover the loaf with greased plastic and let the dough rise for 30 to 40 minutes, until it's pretty puffy-looking. Then bake as detailed below.



Plus NOW...

This is one of the super bonus features of this bread. See the cool scrap shapes? And the bit of extra butter? Time to play baby. Just give 'em a good schmear, and line 'em up on a baking sheet every-which-way. Like below...



After they are all piled up, let them rise until they are puffy-looking, just like the bread. You will want to fire up both ovens, if you have two, or you can assemble the bread and refrigerate it for several hours before you bake it.

Yes, you can build the bread and freeze it, too. Just thaw overnight in the refrigerator the night before you need it. Put it on the counter while your oven preheats (350°F), and bake.

The scraps make a very cool-looking starfish or dinosaur bread. The kids will dig it.



Pretty cool huh???

A word about bake times:

If you are baking the bread in a metal loaf pan, it takes about 22 to 25 minutes. If you are baking in a ceramic pan, it will need as much as 30 to 35, and may want a foil tent for the last 10 to 15 minutes...but every oven is different so you may need to experiment

NOTE: The scraps on a baking sheet will not need much more than 20 minutes.
Tada....



You decide which is your FAV look but the TASTE of both is DE'LISH baby!