

# Mom's Italian Bread



## What You'll Need:

- 4 cups warm water
- 4 ½ teaspoons active dry yeast
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup olive oil, plus more to grease bowl
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 8 cups all-purpose flour\* plus more for surface

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## What You'll Do:

1. Preheat oven to 200°, then turn off.
2. In the biggest bowl you own, combine 4 ½ teaspoons active dry yeast with 4 cups warm water. Water should be warm to the touch, hot tap water will do. Mix until yeast dissolves.
3. Add ⅓ cup sugar, ⅓ cup olive oil, and 2 tablespoons salt and combine.
4. Mix in 8 cups all-purpose flour with a wooden spoon until dough forms into a shaggy ball. Flour a clean surface and plop out your dough. Knead for 10 minutes until dough forms a smooth ball.
5. NOTE: Depending on the humidity in your air, this recipe may take a lot more flour than 8 cups. Keep adding until you reach the shaggy texture! See below step-by-steps for visuals.
6. Lightly grease a clean bowl with olive oil or vegetable oil, then place dough in and flip over so the entire ball is covered in oil.
7. Place a damp towel over the bowl and transfer to the preheated oven. Let dough rise 1-2 hours, until doubled in size.
8. To test the rise, stick a finger in the dough. If the hole stays, my mom says you have done the job right. This is a rule I have used so many times in my life for a number of different endeavors—thanks, mom!

9. Transfer dough to a floured surface and punch it back down to its original size (should take less than a minute). Move the dough back to the greased bowl and let rise 1-2 more hours again on the countertop (no oven required).
10. After your second rise is complete, transfer the dough to a floured surface and punch down again, then cut into 4 pieces and place them in 4 oil-greased loaf pans. You can use other shapes of pans, or even bake freestyle on a sheet. See below for pics of what those options look like!
11. Cover pans with damp towels and rest for 30 minutes until dough rises and fills out the pans. Bake at 400° for 30-35 minutes, making sure to check on them as they bake.
12. Serve your bread hot, room temperature, toasted—endless options! Eating it warm out of the oven with a slab of butter really takes me back!

### **Recipe Notes:**

\*Gluten free All-Purpose 1:1 flour can be used.

Do not halve this recipe! Wrap any extra loaves in plastic wrap tightly and freeze - they defrost perfectly. Just take them out of the freezer and leave them on the counter overnight or heat at 400° for a few minutes.

Loaves of bread make a GREAT gift to friends as well, so be sure to share the love!

**HOT (literally) TIP:** Buy an oven thermometer so you always get accurate reads on what your oven temperature actually is. Ovens often lie and cannot be trusted, and an oven thermometer works as a polygraph test of sorts.