

1: The Best Of Mrs Beeton's Cakes and Baking by Beeton, Isabella

Isabella Mary Beeton (née Mayson), universally known as Mrs Beeton, was the English author of Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management, and is one of the most famous cookery writers.

The yeast is now ready for use; it will keep good for a few weeks, and 1 bottle will be found sufficient for 18 lbs. When required for use, boil 3 lbs. The bottles of yeast require very careful opening, as it is generally exceedingly ripe. Bottle it up, and tie the corks down. When wanted for use, boil potatoes according to the quantity of bread to be made about 3 lbs. Pour the yeast into the hole made in the flour, and stir into it as much of that which lies round it as will make a thick batter, in which there must be no lumps. Strew plenty of flour on the top; throw a thick clean cloth over, and set it where the air is warm; but do not place it upon the kitchen fender, for it will become too much heated there. Look at it from time to time: Then place the pan on a strong chair, or dresser, or table, of convenient height; pour into the sponge the remainder of the warm milk-and-water; stir into it as much of the flour as you can with the spoon; then wipe it out clean with your fingers, and lay it aside. Next take plenty of the remaining flour, throw it on the top of the leaven, and begin, with the knuckles of both hands, to knead it well. When the flour is nearly all kneaded in, begin to draw the edges of the dough towards the middle, in order to mix the whole thoroughly; and when it is free from flour and lumps and crumbs, and does not stick to the hands when touched, it will be done, and may again be covered with the cloth, and left to rise a second time. Turn it then on to a paste-board or very clean dresser, and with a large sharp knife divide it in two; make it up quickly into loaves, and dispatch it to the oven: If baked in tins or pans, rub them with a tiny piece of butter laid on a piece of clean paper, to prevent the dough from sticking to them. All bread should be turned upside down, or on its side, as soon as it is drawn from the oven: To make the dough without setting a sponge, merely mix the yeast with the greater part of the warm milk-and-water, and wet up the whole of the flour at once after a little salt has been stirred in, proceeding exactly, in every other respect, as in the directions just given. As the dough will soften in the rising, it should be made quite firm at first, or it will be too lithe by the time it is ready for the oven. It will grow on poor soils, and is extremely productive. It has been introduced into Italy, where they make a coarse bread from it; and it is also employed in pastry and puddings: It is the largest variety, growing to the height of six feet; but it requires a warm climate, and will not ripen in this country. Stir all well together with a wooden spoon, and pour the mixture into the centre of the flour; mix it to the substance of cream, cover it over closely, and let it remain near the fire for an hour; then add the 5 pints of water, milk-warm, with 2 oz. When baked, the bread should weigh nearly 20 lbs. Another advantage the red wheats possess is their comparative immunity from the attacks of mildew and fly. The best English wheat comes from the counties of Kent and Essex; the qualities under these heads always bearing a higher price than others, as will be seen by the periodical lists in the journals. If the rice is boiled in milk instead of water, it makes very delicious bread or cakes. When boiled in this manner, it may be mixed with the flour without straining the liquid from it. In Asia, Africa, and America, it is the principal daily food of a large portion of the population, especially of the colonists. In some of the provinces of France, too, it is consumed in large quantities. There are eight varieties of the maize; the most productive is the maize of Cusco. The flour of maize is yellow, and it contains an oily matter, which, when fresh, gives it an agreeable flavour and odour; but the action of the air on it soon develops rancidity. If carried any distance, it should be stored away in air-tight vessels. An excellent soup is prepared with meat and maize-flour. The inhabitants of some countries, where wheat is scarce, make, with maize and water, or milk and salt, a kind of biscuit, which is pleasant in taste, but indigestible. Some of the preparations of maize-flour are very good, and, when partaken in moderation, suitable food for almost everybody. Dissolve the soda in the milk, and pour it several times from one basin to another, before adding it to the flour. Work the whole quickly into a light dough, divide it into 2 loaves, and put them into a well-heated oven immediately, and bake for an hour. Sour milk or buttermilk may be used, but then a little less acid will be needed. Large raft-like barges convey this grain down the rivers, from the interior of the country to the seaports. This corn is described as being white, hard, and thin-skinned; and it yields a large quantity of flour, having a small proportion of bran. Put the flour

into a pan, stir in the above ingredients, and let the dough rise, covered in a warm place. Knead it well, make it into rolls, let them rise again for a few minutes, and bake in a quick oven. Richer rolls may be made by adding 1 or 2 eggs and a larger proportion of butter, and their appearance improved by brushing the tops over with yolk of egg or a little milk. This dish, although very unwholesome and indigestible, is nevertheless a great favourite, and eaten by many persons. When they are quite hot, divide them lengthwise into three; put some thin flakes of good butter between the slices, press the rolls together, and put them in the oven for a minute or two, but not longer, or the butter would oil; take them out of the oven, spread the butter equally over, divide the rolls in half, and put them on to a very hot clean dish, and send them instantly to table. To make dry toast properly, a great deal of attention is required; much more, indeed, than people generally suppose. Never use new bread for making any kind of toast, as it eats heavy, and, besides, is very extravagant. Move it backwards and forwards until the bread is nicely coloured; then turn it and toast the other side, and do not place it so near the fire that it blackens. Dry toast should be more gradually made than buttered toast, as its great beauty consists in its crispness, and this cannot be attained unless the process is slow and the bread is allowed gradually to colour. It should never be made long before it is wanted, as it soon becomes tough, unless placed on the fender in front of the fire. As soon as each piece is ready, it should be put into a rack, or stood upon its edges, and sent quickly to table. A loaf of household bread about two days old answers for making toast better than cottage bread, the latter not being a good shape, and too crusty for the purpose. When of a nice colour on both sides, put it on a hot plate; divide some good butter into small pieces, place them on the toast, set this before the fire, and when the butter is just beginning to melt, spread it lightly over the toast. Trim off the crust and ragged edges, divide each round into 4 pieces, and send the toast quickly to table. Some persons cut the slices of toast across from corner to corner, so making the pieces of a three-cornered shape. Soyer recommends that each slice should be cut into pieces as soon as it is buttered, and when all are ready, that they should be piled lightly on the dish they are intended to be served on. He says that by cutting through 4 or 5 slices at a time, all the butter is squeezed out of the upper ones, while the bottom one is swimming in fat liquid. It is highly essential to use good butter for making this dish. Then place them carefully on a hot-plate or stove, and bake them until they are slightly browned, turning them when they are done on one side. Muffins are not easily made, and are more generally purchased than manufactured at home. To toast them, divide the edge of the muffin all round, by pulling it open, to the depth of about an inch, with the fingers. Put it on a toasting-fork, and hold it before a very clear fire until one side is nicely browned, but not burnt; turn, and toast it on the other. Do not toast them too quickly, as, if this is done, the middle of the muffin will not be warmed through. When done, divide them by pulling them open; butter them slightly on both sides, put them together again, and cut them into halves: These are made in the same manner as muffins; only, in making the mixture, let it be more like batter than dough. To toast them, have ready a very bright clear fire; put the crumpet on a toasting-fork, and hold it before the fire, not too close, until it is nicely brown on one side, but do not allow it to blacken. Turn it, and brown the other side; then spread it with good butter, cut it in half, and, when all are done, pile them on a hot dish, and send them quickly to table. Muffins and crumpets should always be served on separate dishes, and both toasted and served as expeditiously as possible. Melt the butter, but do not allow it to oil; stir it into the other ingredients, with enough warm milk to make the whole into a soft dough; then mould it into buns about the size of an egg; lay them in rows quite 3 inches apart; set them again in a warm place, until they have risen to double their size; then put them into a good brisk oven, and just before they are done, wash them over with a little milk. From 15 to 20 minutes will be required to bake them nicely. These buns may be varied by adding a few currants, candied peel, or caraway seeds to the other ingredients; and the above mixture answers for hot cross buns, by putting in a little ground allspice; and by pressing a tin mould in the form of a cross in the centre of the bun. Sufficient to make 18 buns. Add the baking-powder, beat the dough well for about 10 minutes, divide it into 24 pieces, put them into buttered tins or cups, and bake in a brisk oven from 20 to 30 minutes. Sufficient to make 12 buns. Seasonable at any time. Mix all these ingredients well together; make a hole in the middle of the flour, and pour in the milk, mixed with the egg, which should be well beaten; mix quickly, and set the dough, with a fork, on baking-tins, and bake the buns for about 20 minutes. Sufficient to make about 12 buns. They should be put into the oven immediately, or they

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will become heavy; and the oven should be tolerably brisk. Sufficient to make 7 or 8 buns. A stale Savoy or lemon cake may be converted into very good rusks in the following manner. Cut the cake into slices, divide each slice in two; put them on a baking-sheet, in a slow oven, and when they are of a nice brown and quite hard, they are done. They should be kept in a closed tin canister in a dry place, to preserve their crispness. It grows in sandy soils that will not do for the cultivation of many other kinds of grain, and forms the chief sustenance in the arid districts of Arabia, Syria, Nubia, and parts of India. It is not cultivated in England, being principally confined to the East. The nations who make use of it grind it, in the primitive manner, between two stones, and make it into a diet which, cannot be properly called bread, but rather a kind of soft thin cake half-baked. When we take into account that the Arabians are fond of lizards and locusts as articles of food, their cuisine, altogether, is scarcely a tempting one. Put the flour into a basin with the sugar, mix these well together, and beat the eggs. Stir them with the yeast to the milk and butter, and with this liquid work the flour into a smooth dough. Cover a cloth over the basin, and leave the dough to rise by the side of the fire; then knead it, and divide it into 12 pieces; place them in a brisk oven, and bake for about 20 minutes. Take the rusks out, break them in half, and then set them in the oven to get crisp on the other side. When cold, they should be put into tin canisters to keep them dry; and, if intended for the cheese course, the sifted sugar should be omitted. Sufficient to make 2 dozen rusks. Whisk the whites of the eggs to a strong froth; mix them with the pounded almonds, stir in the sugar, and beat altogether. When the cake is sufficiently baked, lay on the almond icing, and put it into the oven to dry. Before laying this preparation on the cake, great care must be taken that it is nice and smooth, which is easily accomplished by well beating the mixture. Beat the mixture well until the sugar is smooth; then with a spoon or broad knife lay the icing equally over the cakes. These should then be placed in a very cool oven, and the icing allowed to dry and harden, but not to colour. The icing may be coloured with strawberry or currant-juice, or with prepared cochineal. If it be put on the cakes as soon as they are withdrawn from the oven, it will become firm and hard by the time the cakes are cold. All iced cakes should be kept in a very dry place. This powder may be purchased in tin canisters, and may also be prepared at home.

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