



Bread Recipes

December 2014

Merry Christmas 2014! This was the year I finally launched the bakery I've been dreaming about. "Meadowlark Granary" is my home-based bakery that sells whole-grain breads and whole-wheat flour using the wheat and flax grown by my family on our farm. In August 2014 I sold bread at the Bottineau Farmers Market and not long after, I registered the business name *Meadowlark Granary*. My whole wheat flax bread and wholegrain banana bread always sold well and I began dreaming up other breads; recipes with dark, rich, caramel and spice flavors that would work well with the nutty flavor and dense texture imparted by whole wheat flour. Meadowlark Granary's offerings will expand as I continue to create new recipes. (In my mental queue: deep dark pumpnickel bread; a dense German sunflower-seed bread, a flax-and-honey-based fruit and nut bar (gluten free), and a whole-wheat version of my Grandma's German pumpkin turnovers ("Plachenda"). If I lived closer, I would give you fresh bread for Christmas, but I haven't yet figured out how to ship bread and keep it fresh. Instead my gift to you (inspired by the homemade cookbook Sandi gave a few years back) is this small collection of my bread recipes, all created, borrowed or adapted in my kitchen.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and I hope your year is filled with good food and good friends.

Love to you,
Stephanie



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Yeast Breads



Kneading is a fold-press-push motion. This develops the gluten, the protein which gives the bread its structure. Gluten is stretchy and sticky and as yeast and heat release gases, tiny bubbles and pockets form, given structure by the gluten, and the dough rises. The more you knead the dough, the more developed the gluten and the more bubbles giving a finer the texture to the finished loaf. This is why I always knead the dough 300 strokes, (which I learned from Mom). Less kneading produces a coarser crumb and a fluffier texture that tends to crumble.

Whole wheat flour produces a moister finished product, but the flour also absorbs more moisture as you're making the dough. This is why you can't simply substitute whole wheat for all-purpose flour one to one. Always use less (about two-thirds) the amount of flour if you are substituting whole wheat for all-purpose white flour.



Batter made with whole wheat flour tends to thicken a bit after it sits. The flour seems to absorb the moisture. To prevent this I add some of the flour and then let the batter or soft dough sit for a few minutes to absorb the liquid. If I didn't do this I would get to the point where I thought my dough had the right amount of flour and THEN the moisture would absorb and I'd be left with a dry, tough dough with too much flour.

Here is how I shape loaves. I punch my dough down and knead it a few times to get air bubbles out. Then I portion out my dough and weigh it. I make my loaves 1 lb 5 oz. Knead your dough portion 2 -3 times and then use a rolling pin to roll it in to an elongated oval, pressing firmly to press out any air bubbles. Start at one narrow end and roll your oval tightly into a log. Pinch the ends of the log closed with the blade of your hand and fold the end pinched ends under. Roll your loaf back and forth against the counter with your hands cupped around the ends to shape your loaf and smooth out the seams on the bottom.

To shape round dinner rolls I measure out 2 oz chunks of dough, and knead each little ball a couple times to press out the air. I flour my hands and roll the ball against the counter with my palm flattened, then I keep rolling and start to cup my hand a little and finally I cup my hand tightly and continue rolling. The idea is to stretch the top surface of the roll tight and the friction of the dough rolling against the counter will smooth the bottom of the roll. It takes some practice. My goal is to do two at once, one in each hand, but I'm not yet that coordinated.



Grain Trucks and Wheat Gum

I have many childhood memories of “helping” Dad or Mom unload the wheat-filled grain trucks into the grain bin. The back of the truck has a small sliding door which is raised, hydraulics tip the box of truck up, and the grain runs out the little door. There’s not much to do but wait and watch as bushels of wheat gush from the end gate, into the black rubber hopper and are carried by a spiraling grain auger up to the top of the bin where the grain rains down and piles up until the bin is full. As we stood there Dad would say, “Do you want some wheat gum?” and hand me a handful of wheat kernels. I chewed them carefully without swallowing and slowly the germ and bran separated from the wheat gluten in my mouth. I swallowed the germ and bran and I was left with a little chunk of wheat gluten “gum” to chew. I still do this when I unload grain trucks.



Meadowlark Bread (Whole Wheat Flax Bread)

This is my primary bread recipe for Meadowlark Granary and also the go-to bread recipe at our farm. It uses our flour from the wheat we grow, flaxmeal from the flax we grow, honey from Gunter Honey Co. which puts hives on our land and pays their rent in honey, and eggs from my mom's chickens. This is adapted from a Mennonite bread recipe that my Aunt Raylene found in a cookbook published by the assisted living center in southern Manitoba where her mother-in-law was living. Southern Manitoba has many Mennonite communities and that is the tradition from which my uncle came. Aunt Raylene made some adjustments to the recipe and sold many loaves of the bread at a farmers market in Minot, ND. Now I have several customers who come back week after week to buy this bread.



7 ½ cups whole wheat flour	2 eggs
1 ½ TBSP salt	½ cup sunflower oil
½ cup cornmeal	3 TBSP honey
½ cup flaxmeal	3 TBSP molasses
½ TBSP sugar	4 cups warm water
2 TBSP yeast	

This makes about four loaves. Combine 1 cup of flour and dry ingredients. Soften yeast in 1 cup of the warm water with ½ TBSP sugar added. (Or simply add yeast to dry ingredients. It works fine without softening.) Combine wet ingredients and softened yeast mixture and add dry ingredients to wet. Whisk 50 strokes. Let stand five minutes and then add remaining flour ½ cup at a time until you have a dough. Knead 300 strokes on a lightly floured surface. Let raise in a greased bowl for 1 hour. Punch down and shape into 1lb 5 oz loaves and let raise in pans greased with olive oil for ½ hour. Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes.

100% Whole Wheat Buns

I remember finding this recipe one summer when we were going to have a cookout and wanted to make homemade hotdog buns. I think I found it online, but have forgotten where. Sugar adds flavor, tenderness and helps things brown, so I think it's the sugar in these that makes me want to eat the whole batch. These are great as dinner rolls, hamburger buns (make them about 3 oz. and space further apart) or hot dog buns. If you're making hot dog buns, shape them like tiny elongated bread loaves and don't forget that they get larger as they rise.

7 cups whole wheat flour	¼ cup sunflower oil
2 TBSP yeast	2 eggs
4 TBSP sugar	2 cups warm water
2 ½ tsp salt	1 egg white whisked w/ water for wash

This makes two dozen 2 oz buns.) Combine wet ingredients. Combine dry ingredients with only 1 cup of the flour. Combine wet ingredients. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and whisk 50 strokes. Let rest 5 minutes. Gradually add in remaining flour until you have a dough. Knead 300 strokes. Let rise 1 hour. Punch down and shape into 2 oz spheres or shape into hot dog buns. Arrange on well-greased pan. Let rise 30 minutes or until doubled. Brush with egg white whisked with a little water. Bake at 375° for about 15 minutes or until browned. (I use my nose to gauge when baked things are done.)

Holly's Best Herb Rolls

This recipe comes from my friend and co-worker, Holly Mawby, who with her husband Barry, runs gardendwellers FARM, North Dakota's only organic herb farm. www.gardendwellersfarm.com This is an adaptation of "Holly's best herb bread" which uses fresh basil, thyme and winter savory grown on their farm. The recipe is at <http://www.gardendwellersfarm.com/doc/OurBestRecipes.pdf>

Holly is also the director of the Entrepreneurial Center for Horticulture (ECH) at Dakota College at Bottineau (DCB). As DCB's Grant Writer I have the pleasure of working closely with Holly as I write grants for the ECH.

This recipe works well with either fresh or dried herbs. I get winter savory from Holly, but it is available online if you can't find it in the store. Or perhaps you could experiment with substituting another dried herb.

1 ½ TBSP yeast	6 tsp chopped basil
½ cup warm water	6 tsp chopped thyme
1 cup milk	6 tsp chopped winter savory
5.3 oz butter, cubed	4 ½ cups whole wheat flour
2 TBSP sugar	2 cups white flour
½ tsp salt	1 cup sharp cheddar cubed and frozen and rolled in
4 eggs	2 cups sharp cheddar shredded
	1 egg white whisked with a little water for wash

This is a double recipe and makes about two dozen rolls. Cube one cup of cheese in pea-sized cubes, roll the cubes in flour and put in the freezer. Shred two cups of cheese. Chop the herbs (if using fresh). Soften yeast in warm water with a little sugar. Heat milk and butter until butter melts. Cool a bit. Whisk in the remaining sugar and salt. Let cool to room temperature or below 96 degrees. You don't want to cook the eggs or kill the yeast. Whisk in the eggs, then the yeast, then the herbs, then the 2 cups white flour, then the shredded cheese, then add whole wheat flour ½ cup at a time until you have a dough. Knead 150 strokes. Then knead in the frozen cubed cheese the remaining 150 strokes. (The shredded cheese will be absorbed into the dough and give it a lovely cheesy flavor. The cubed frozen cheese will create little orange pockets of cheesy goodness in the finished rolls.) Raise 1 ½ hour at room temp or until doubled. Punch down gently and shape into 2 oz balls. Arrange 13 per pan 3-2-3-2-3. Let raise ½ hour or until the right size. Brush with egg white wash and sprinkle a little finely shredded cheese on the top of each one. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes. (You may want to wait until there is only ten minutes of baking time left before sprinkling the cheese so it doesn't get too brown.)

Batter Breads

All of the batter breads are my own creations, though the banana bread and ginger bread are adapted from other recipes. The other breads are my own, starting with the banana bread recipe as my base recipe.

I use small loaf pans, roughly 3" x 5" for my batter breads and I fill them about half full. I've found that if I grease pans with oil for batter breads, the batter absorbs the oil and the bread sticks to the pan. I know always grease my pans with butter for batter breads. This does mean, however, that you must watch your oven carefully as butter causes browning and sometimes these batter breads come out of the oven with perfect tops and blackened bottoms.



Wholegrain Banana Bread



This banana bread recipe is adapted from one that came from a friend who got it from either Weightwatchers or TOPS. The oil makes for a nice moist bread and the honey and vanilla give it a really heavenly flavor. The whole wheat flour and flax meal increase the fiber and make this a relatively healthy loaf of banana bread.

(single batch– makes about 2 -3 small loaves)

1 ½ cups whole wheat flour	¼ cup sunflower oil
1/3 cup flaxmeal	½ cup honey
1 tsps cinnamon	1 tsp vanilla
2 tsps baking powder	1 cups banana
½ tsps. baking soda	1 eggs
¼ tsps. salt	

Combine dry ingredients and sift if there are lumps. Combine wet ingredients in blender and blend smooth. Mix wet and dry until just well mixed. Spoon into well-greased small loaf pans and bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes. Carefully tip out onto racks to cool.

Apple Caramel Bread



This is my own creation and everyone who has tried it loves it. I wanted to incorporate the apples from Mom's tree into a yummy bread and also work with the nutty flavor of whole wheat flour. I thought of caramel and how well caramel and apple go together.

Boiled cider can be purchased online from King Arthur Flour, but I make my own. I buy a jug of apple cider, dump it into the biggest soup pot I have and bring it to a boil uncovered on the stovetop. Then I let it simmer for hours until it cooks down into a thick syrup. If you let it cook too long it will become caramel, which is delicious, but impossible to work with. You want a consistency a hair thinner than honey, as it will thicken to the consistency of honey as it cools. This keeps well in the refrigerator and will amp up the apple flavor of anything to which it is added.

The topping for this bread is also my own creation. I wanted to add more apple flavor and have some sort of crunchy topping. I dehydrated peeled, thinly sliced apples and then put the dehydrated apples in the oven at 200° for 10-15 minutes or just until they got so dry and crispy that they could be pulverized. I whirled the dried apples in a food processor until they became powder and mixed the powder with coarse turbinado sugar which provides the crunch. Sprinkle this on the loaves toward the end of the baking time. If you sprinkle it too soon it will dissolve into the batter and get soggy.

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Apple Caramel Bread (*continued*)

1 ½ cups whole wheat flour	3 TBSP sunflower oil
¾ cups white flour	2.7 oz butter (melted)
¼ cups flaxmeal	3 TBSP honey
½ cup brown sugar	1 eggs
3 tsps baking powder	2 tsps vanilla
¾ tsps baking soda	1 ½ cups applesauce
¼ tsps. salt	½ cup boiled cider
1 ½ tsps cinnamon	½ cup chopped peeled apples
(powdered dried apple mixed w/turbinado sugar)	1/3 cup caramel bits

(1 ½ batch – makes 3-4 small loaves) Combine dry ingredients. Stir in chopped apples and make sure they're well-coated in flour. Stir in caramel bits. Combine wet ingredients in blender and blend smooth. Stir wet into dry just until combined. Pour into well-greased small loaf pans. Sprinkle a few caramel bits on the top of each loaf to make sure they're visible in the final loaf. Bake for 10 minutes, then sprinkle turbinado sugar/powdered dried apple mixture over the top of each loaf. Put back in oven to finish baking another 5 -10 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.



Cocoacoco Banana Bread



This is my own creation. I was thinking about “Monkeytails” those chocolate-dipped frozen bananas and wondering what would happen if I added cocoa powder to my banana bread recipe. I first named this “Funky Monkey Bread” but people kept assuming it was caramel pull-aparts which also are called “Monkey-bread.”

2 TBSP cocoa powder	¼ cup oil
½ cup white flour	2 tsp vanilla
1 cup whole wheat flour	1 cup mashed banana
2 tsp baking powder	1 egg
½ tsp baking soda	½ cup coconut flakes (big flakes, like Bob’s Red Mill)
¼ tsp salt	1/3 cup cocoa nibs
½ cup plus 2 TBSP brown sugar	1/8 cup (small handful) milk chocolate chips

Combine dry ingredients plus coconut flakes, cocoa nibs and choco chips. Combine wet ingredients in blender, blend smooth and pour into dry ingredients. Mix just until combined. Spoon/pour into greased small loaf pans. Bake at 350° for 15 – 20 minutes. Sprinkle coconut flakes on top after about 5 minutes in the oven. (If you sprinkle the coconut flakes right away they get too brown in the oven.)

Pumpkin Cranberry Bread

I knew I needed a pumpkin bread for the holidays and after eating a delicious pumpkin cranberry bread at the San Diego farmers market I came up with this. Just like the other batter breads I've created I used my banana bread recipe as the base for this recipe and adapted from there.

(single batch – makes 2-3 small loaves)

2 cups whole wheat flour	½ cup sunflower oil
1/3 cup flax meal	1 cup honey
3 tsp cinnamon	3 tsp vanilla
1 tsp nutmeg	2 cups pumpkin
1 tsp ground cardamom	1 egg
3 tsp baking powder	
¾ tsp baking soda	1 cup dried cranberries
½ tsp salt	

Sift dry ingredients into a large bowl. Combine wet ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Stir into dry ingredients just until combined. Stir in dried cranberries. Spoon into well-greased small loaf pans greased. Sprinkle tops with a few dried cranberries. Bake at 350° for 15 – 20 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool on racks.

Gingerbread

What would Christmas be without gingerbread? This is not the thin crispy gingerbread from which people cut little men and build gingerbread houses. This is a rich dense cake-like loaf with a beautiful chewy crusty top and I think it is heavenly. This gingerbread recipe comes from food blogger Deb Perelman at www.smittenkitchen.com. It's a combination of her "Gingerbread Snacking Cake" <http://smittenkitchen.com/blog/2013/12/gingerbread-snacking-cake/> and "Gramercy Tavern's Gingerbread" <http://smittenkitchen.com/blog/2008/12/gramercy-taverns-gingerbread/> For my dark beer I used Souris River Brewing Co.'s Frozen Tundra Spiced Ale. (Minot, ND finally has a micro-brewery, and it's goood!)

My gingerbread loaves come out of the oven with a top that is flecked with tiny bubbles and has a caramelized sugar texture. Yet the inside is moist and cake-like. I love the texture of the top, but I'm not sure why this happens. My theory is that this comes from the foaming you get when you add the baking soda to the hot beer. The reason I think this is that it reminds me of the foaming that happens when you add the baking soda to the melted brown sugar/butter/corn syrup mixture when you make caramel corn and the top of the bread is not unlike the hard caramel coating on caramel corn. I have not, however, been able to find any sources online that confirm my theory.

1 cup dark beer (Guinness or Oatmeal Stout)	1 2/3 cups whole wheat flour
1 cup molasses	3/4 cup white flour
1/3 cup honey	2 tsp baking powder
1 1/2 tsp baking soda	1/2 tsp salt
2/3 cup brown sugar	2 tsp cinnamon
1 TBSP grated fresh ginger	2 tsps ground ginger
4 oz butter - cubed	1/2 tsp cloves
2 large eggs	1 tsp nutmeg
	1 tsp cardamom

This makes about four-five loaves. Heat beer to boiling, and whisk in baking soda. It will foam. Whisk in molasses, honey, brown sugar, grated ginger and butter. Pour into mixing bowl and let cool until it's cool enough not to cook the eggs. Beat in the eggs. Sift dry ingredients over the top. Mix just until well combined (no lumps). Pour into well-greased (butter) and floured small loaf pans. Bake 350° for 30-35 minutes. Turn out of pans and cool on a rack. When cool sift powdered sugar over. I traced this gingerbread man shape onto parchment paper, cut it out with an x-acto knife and laid it on top the bread before I sifted the powdered sugar over it. Remove the parchment carefully and the design will remain. The result was very pretty. Be sure you do this shortly before serving as I found that the powdered sugar will absorb into the gingerbread over time and ruin your design.

