WL 153

West Virginia University
EXTENSION SERVICE

# Bread-tastic!

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*Bread is a traditional, global mainstay that is referred to as the staff of life . . . farming of cereal grains date to the beginning of the Neolithic Era around 10,000 B.C.*

Breads are a grain food high in carbohydrates, making them a quick source of energy. There are two categories of breads. Refined grains have been milled to give the grains a finer texture but certain nutrients have been removed. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel and are higher in fiber. Always check the product's ingredient list to see if it's made with whole grain or stoneground flour, or enriched flour.

## Bread . . . all shapes and sizes

Bread is considered a staple food item around the world, as its basic ingredients are flour and water. Below are some of the common breads found in the United States and throughout the world.

- Bagels are chewy baked rolls with a hole in the center, popular in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.
- Baguette is a French bread that is typically 2-feet in length and known for its crispy crust and soft inside.
- Cornbread is most often associated with Southern cuisine and uses cornmeal as the main ingredient.
- Chapati, common in India and Pakistan, is flat and round with a chewy texture.
- Lefse is traditional Scandinavian bread that is made from mashed potatoes, flour, and milk or cream. Then it is fried on a griddle.

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- Naan, a flatbread from Central and South Asia, is often baked in a tandoor or clay oven.
- Pita is pocket bread from the Middle East that is round, flat, and hollow inside.
- Tortilla, made from flour or corn dough, is patted into thin, flat rounds, and fried on a hot griddle.
- Scones are like biscuits but cut into big, thick triangles or circular shapes and baked.

## Raise up or lay flat

Some breads use a leavening agent that make the bread rise or expand in size; however, unleavened breads are flat with a hard exterior. Most leavened breads use yeast as a single-cell microorganism that aids in the process of fermentation, causing the bread to rise. There are two types of leavening agents: yeast (biological raising agent) and baking powder or baking soda (chemical raising agents).

## Why should we eat bread?

Bread is a traditional, global mainstay that is referred to as the staff of life. Although evidence of flour made from wild grains exists, anthropologists date regular farming of cereal grains to the beginning of the Neolithic Era around 10,000 B.C.

The U.S. dietary guidelines recommends 3 to 6 servings of grains daily. In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal is considered 1 ounce. At least half of these servings should be whole grains.

Grains are the hard seeds, or fruits, of certain types of grasses. The three most commonly produced grains include corn, rice, and wheat. Each of these are used to make bread; however, barley, sorghum, millet, oats, triticale, rye, and buckwheat can also be used.

## Oatmeal dinner rolls

*From Louise Donato, former WVU Extension agent*

1 package active dry yeast
½ cup warm water
1 cup milk
¼ cup shortening
¼ cup sugar
2 teaspoons salt
1 cup cooked oatmeal
4½ to 5 cups flour

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Heat milk, sugar, salt, and shortening in saucepan until warm, stirring constantly. Transfer to large mixing bowl. Add oatmeal and 1 cup flour. Beat until smooth. Add enough flour to make soft dough. Knead dough on a floured surface until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes). Place dough in greased bowl; cover and let rise in warm place until size doubles (about 1½ hours). Punch down and shape as desired. Cover and let rise in warm place until size doubles (about 45 minutes). Bake at 400 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Invert on wire rack to cool; brush tops with melted butter. Makes 24 to 36 rolls.

## Chapati

1½ cups whole wheat flour
½ teaspoon salt
⅔ cup warm water
Oil for cooking
Stick of margarine (to serve)

In a large mixing bowl, combine flour and salt. Slowly stir in water, mixing until dough forms a ball. On a floured surface, knead the dough until it is smooth and sticky (5 to 10 minutes). Place it in a covered bowl for 30 minutes. Divide the dough into 15 to 20 pieces. Roll each one in a circle. Lightly rub the frying pan with oil and heat it until it smokes. Cook the dough until it is brown and puffy on both sides. Serve warm with a bit of margarine. Makes 15 to 20 servings.

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FH13-374