Crusty Dutch Oven Bread

Serves a crowd · Family favorite · Makes 2 loaves (boules)

Ken's note: TBD

The go-to crusty, quickish bread: a basic yeast dough, two rises, and a bake in preheated cast-iron Dutch ovens, which gives a crackling crust. Two loaves, so there is plenty to share.

Ingredients

- 3 cups water, heated in the microwave 1 minute (about 100–110°F: warm, not hot)
- 2 Tbsp kosher salt
- About 1½ Tbsp active dry yeast
- About 8 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for the counter

Method

1. Mix the water, salt, and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the flour and mix with the dough hook until the dough comes together in a coherent ball.
2. Leave the dough in the mixer bowl, or move it to a large bowl, and cover with plastic wrap. Let it rise until somewhat more than doubled, about 1 to 1½ hours, depending on the kitchen.
3. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead for a couple of minutes. Divide in two and form each piece into a boule. Set them on parchment paper on a baking sheet, cover with a clean towel, and let them rise again until somewhat more than doubled, another 1 to 1½ hours.
4. While the loaves rise, put two cast-iron Dutch ovens, with their lids, in the oven and preheat it to 465°F.
5. Cut the parchment around each boule and slash the top. Carefully drop each loaf, on its parchment, into a hot Dutch oven. Put the lids on and bake 30 minutes. Take the lids off and bake 5–6 minutes more to finish browning. Cool on a rack.
6. The pots and lids are very hot; use thick oven mitts.