Irish Soda Bread

Quick · Makes 1 round loaf (serves 8)

Ken's note: TBD

The traditional loaf: four ingredients, no yeast, no butter, and no waiting. The buttermilk and baking soda do the rising, so mix it quickly and bake it right away. Best the day it is made, with butter.

Ingredients

- 4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for the counter
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1½ tsp salt
- 1¾ cups buttermilk

Method

1. No buttermilk? Put a scant 2 Tbsp white vinegar or lemon juice in a measuring cup, fill to 1¾ cups with milk, and let it sit 5 minutes.
2. Heat the oven to 425°F and flour a baking sheet or line it with parchment. Whisk the flour, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in most of the buttermilk. Mix with your hand or a wooden spoon, quickly and lightly, adding the rest only if there are dry spots, just until a shaggy, sticky dough forms.
3. Turn it onto a floured counter and shape it with floured hands into a round about 6 inches across and 2 inches high, handling it as little as possible. Set it on the baking sheet. With a sharp floured knife, cut a deep cross in the top, about 1 inch deep and nearly to the edges, so the loaf bakes through.
4. Bake about 40 minutes, until the crust is deep golden and the loaf sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom. Cool on a rack at least 20 minutes before slicing.

Notes

Variation. stir 1 cup raisins and 1 Tbsp caraway seeds into the flour before adding the buttermilk.