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## How to Make "Ellijay Apple Bread" at Home!

### Blake's Ellijay Apple Bread

OK, so no one in Ellijay would spill the beans (or apples...) and give me their recipe for Ellijay apple bread. No matter.. as a former chef I was determined to reverse-engineer the recipe. And I have!

Following this recipe, you'll make bread that tastes just like the Ellijay apple bread... without the long drive at today's gas prices to get it! (why don't they sell it in Atlanta, Chattanooga, Nashville, Charlotte and other Southern cities?)

After tasting and testing a dozen loaves of apple bread last weekend in Ellijay, I discovered that there are two main types: yeast and quick. The yeast type uses yeast to raise the dough; the quick type uses baking powder. The consensus among my group of tasters is that the yeast variety is substantially better!

The quick types are definitely faster and easier to make, but most people do prefer the yeast types. It's up to you to choose!

Plus, I've eliminated the trans-fats and much of the fat I saw listed on the ingredients on the packages of Ellijay Apple breads that I tasted, so this version ought to be healthier than anything you can buy!

[Let me know](#) which you like and any tips and tricks you learn and I'll share them here! I keep tweaking and improving the recipe each time I make, so it always gets a little better. But the version below is better than any I've had in Ellijay!

### Blake's Yeast Apple Bread

Revised January 2021

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup warm water (to start the yeast)
- 2 packets of dry yeast (Fleischman's or whichever you prefer; you will find it near the baking supplies, like baking powder and spices in the grocery store)
- 1 teaspoon of salt (optional)
- 2 Tablespoons Cinnamon
- 1/2 cup of sugar OR 1/2 cup of honey or agave (for sweetness AND the yeast needs it!) I presume that diabetics could make a solution of an equivalent amount of Splenda or Stevia with a 1/2 cup of water, but I have



not tried that.

- 1/3 cup of vegetable shortening (I use coconut oil; others use the trans-fat-free version of Crisco - in the green label)
- 1 and 2/3 cups of hot water
- 3/4 cup applesauce
- 2 medium sweet apples (Red Delicious, Fuji, Gala, etc.), peeled, cored, sliced and diced to yeild 1/2 cup finely sliced, chopped apples (about 1/8 inch thick, and 1/3 to 1/2 inch across; in other words, about the same size and thickness of a nickel)
- 2/3 cup of powdered milk (I use nonfat dry milk) (lactose intolerant? Almond milk adds nice flavor)
- 7 to 8 cups of all-purpose flour or bread flour (but NOT self-rising flour!) White whole wheat flour works, and I would guess whole wheat does, too. I haven't yet tried a gluten-free flour like oat flour or rice flour.



## Icing ingredients

- 1 cup powdered sugar (aka, confectioner's sugar), Again, diabetics might want to skip ther icing or make a sugar-free version with milk and vanilla extract.
- 1 to 2 tablespoons of milk
- 1/4 teaspoon of vanilla extract

## Directions

### Step 1 - Activate the yeast

Dissolve the yeast in the 1/2 cup of warm water and set it aside in a warm place (room temperature is fine, unless your room is below 60 F (15 C) ), to activate the yeast.



### Step 2 - Make the dough

Combine the salt, cinnamon, sugar (or honey; I prefer honey) shortening and hot water in a large bowl and mix them well with a large spoon and/or your hands.

### Step 3 - Add the applesauce, dry milk and yeast mixture

Stir in the applesauce, next the powdered milk, then the yeast/water mixture. It will obviously be pretty soupy!



## Step 4 - Gradually add the flour

Slowly add the flour, about 1 cup at a time, pausing to mix well, until it forms a stiff dough. It will start out wet, then get sticky. You want to add just enough flour to get barely get to the "sticky" stage. It will probably take about 6.5 to 7 cups of flour.



## Step 5 - Knead the dough

On a lightly floured board, or countertop, knead the dough for about 10 minutes. Of course, if you have a KitchenAid (Sunbeam, or equivalent) with a dough hook, you can use that to knead the dough (much easier!)



## Step 6 - Peel the apples

Peel and core 2 medium to large apples. The fastest way to peel the apples is one of these peelers! If you use the blade up (on the end of it), it also slices and cores the apples, in addition to peeling! With firm apples, it takes about 20 seconds per apple. These apple peelers don't work well on soft, mushy apples or apples with soft spots on them. In that case your stuck with a hand peeler!





## Step 7 - Dice the apples

I like pieces that are about 1/8 inch thick and 1/4 to 1/2 inch across. Mix the apple pieces into the dough.



## Step 8 - Let the dough rise until doubled in size

Put the dough in a large bowl covered with cling film (plastic wrap) and set it in a warm place (80 F to 110 F) to rise. I turn the oven on for 5 minutes at 200 F to get it warm, then turn it off and put the bowl of dough in there.



## Step 9 - Punch the dough down

When the dough has rise to about double in size, uncover the dough and with your fists, punch it down. You can shape the dough into a likeness of your mother-in-law before you punch it down, but that is strictly optional.

## Step 10 - Let the dough rise again

Cover the bowl again and put it back in the warm place (80 F to 110 F) to rise again, until it has doubled in size.



## Step 11 - Grease the bread loaf pans

While the dough is rising, take 2 standard bread loaf pans (9" x 5") and lightly grease (using shortening or butter) and then "flour" (put 3 tablespoons of flour in and shake it around, then dump the excess out) them.



## Step 12 - Make the loaves

Split the dough into 2 equal halves, then shape each half into a bread loaf that will fit in the pan (i.e., make an oblong/rectangle shape)



## Step 13 - Let the loaves rise

Put the two loaves back in the warm place (80 F to 110 F) to rise until they are just 1/2 inch to 1 inch above the top of the pans. This usually takes about 30 minutes. If you have two ovens, get the other oven heating to 350 F.



## Step 14 - Make the icing

Do this while the loaves are rising. This is easy! Just put 1 cup of powdered sugar in a bowl, add 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract and then 1 tablespoon milk. If it is still too thick, add just a teaspoon of milk. It takes very little milk to liquefy the sugar!

## Step 15 - Back until golden brown

Some people like to put thinly sliced pieces of apples on top of the loaves just before baking them.

Bake in the 350 F oven for about 25 to 35 minutes. The crust should be golden brown and a thermometer inserted should read between 185 F and 200 F. A convection oven is ideal for bread since there are no hot spots, otherwise put it in the center of the oven and check on it so you can pull it out when it hits a nice golden brown.



## Step 16 - Turn out on a cooling rack

Turn the loaf out of the pan and rest it on its side on a cooling rack for 45 minutes to 1 hour.



## Step 17 - Icing

While it is cooling you can spoon the icing over the top!

