



Seed Crusted Kefir Bread

Makes One Loaf

Ingredients (can be doubled for 2 loaves)

- 2 ½ tsp (or 1 package) active dry yeast
- ¼ cup warm water
- ½ tsp sugar
- 2 Tbsp butter, cut into ¼ inch cubes
- 1 cup plain kefir
- 2 Tbsp. peanut oil or canola oil
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1 ½ tsp table salt
- 1 egg beaten, room temp (USE HALF FOR THE BREAD and save the other half to top the bread)
- 3-4 c flour total – 1 use 2 cups white bread flour and 1 cup white whole wheat, then add whatever regular bread flour I need-usually ½-¾ cup more
- ¼ cup seeds (I mixed sesame, sunflower and chia seeds)

Instructions

In a small cup, add yeast to water and sugar until it proofs or foams a bit.

In a 2 cup glass measuring cup, combine kefir and butter and heat to room temperature, add oil, honey, salt, ½ egg and the proofed yeast.

Place 2 cups of bread flour and 1 cup of white whole wheat flour in a mixing bowl, add all the liquid and stir to combine. Keep adding bread flour one tablespoon at a time until it holds together and is able to be kneaded.

Knead for five minutes on the counter, return to a buttered bowl, cover with a dishcloth and let it rise for an hour at 85 degrees or so. Punch down the bread, let it rest five minutes and form into a loaf. Place it into a 9 x 5 well buttered bread pan or make a free form loaf on a parchment lined cookie sheet. Cover and let it rise for about 25 minutes at 85 degrees (MW - do you do this in the oven? Can ovens be heated to only 85 degrees??-my oven has a proof setting, so yes I can. Otherwise I should be kept in a warm room covered for an hour), remove the cover and make three slashes on top of the dough. Let it continue rising while you preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Once the oven has preheated and the bread is ready to bake (at least 45 minutes from when you formed the loaf) brush the top with the beaten egg/water mix, cover generously with seeds, and brush again with the egg/water mixture to keep the seeds from falling off. I usually put the pan in my sink and sprinkle the seeds from above with my hands so they are evenly distributed.

Bake the bread mid oven at 350 for 32 minutes. The bread will rise about 2-3 inches above the top edge of the pan. Remove the bread pan from the oven, let it sit on a cooling rack for five minutes and gently rock back and forth to release the bread from the pan onto the rack.

Let it cool at least an hour before slicing. Spread with butter and/or jam, and enjoy!

PS: I am thinking next time I'll make around, free form loaf without a bread pan so that the entire crust and sides can be coated with seeds. A little more rustic, don't you think?