

SIMPLE CRUSTY BREAD

1 & 1/2 pkt. freeze dried yeast (available in all supermarkets)

1 & 1/2 Tbsp salt

6 & 1/2 cups bakers flour

3 cups warm water (I always need about 1/2 cup extra)

In a large plastic container mix yeast, salt and flour together, then add warm water. If it is too hot to put your finger in, then it is too hot to use and will kill the yeast. Mix dough with a wooden spoon until it is all moistened with no dry bits - dough should be fairly loose. Do not knead it. Cover with lid - NOT airtight - and leave to rise 2-5 hours. At this point, the dough can be refrigerated for up to 2 weeks. When you are ready to bake a loaf just cut off a piece of the dough of the required size. Turn in your hands to lightly stretch the dough, tucking it in on itself underneath to form a ball. Rest the dough for about 45 minutes on a sheet sprinkled with cornmeal. Preheat oven to 210C and after the dough has rested sprinkle with a little flour and slash diagonally on the top. Put in oven either on the baking sheet or transfer to a preheated pizza stone. Place a tray in the bottom of the oven and put 1-2 cups of hot water in it. The steam produced by this water will give you a lovely crunchy crust on your loaf. Bake for 30 minutes or until the bottom of the loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on a rack.