

Limpa Rye Bread

makes 3–4 loaves

Part one:

¼ cup water, warm*
2 tablespoons sugar or honey
2 tablespoons dry yeast
2 cups milk, scalded and allowed to cool to lukewarm*
2 cups water, warm*
½ cup molasses
¾ cup sugar, white or brown
2 cups rye flour
3–4 cups white flour
2–3 eggs, beaten

Part two:

½ cup vegetable oil or melted butter
2 tablespoons salt
1 tablespoon anise seed
orange rind, grated, from 2 oranges
1 teaspoon cardamom
2 cups rye flour
3 or more cups white flour
flour for kneading
oil for bowl and pans

***85–105 degrees F.**

Part one: Combine the sweetening with the warm water in a small dish, and sprinkle the yeast on the surface. Allow this to sit for 10 minutes.

Scald the milk and set aside. In a large bowl, combine the warm water, molasses, and sugar. Add the milk when it has cooled to lukewarm, then add the yeast mixture. Add the flour, one or two cups at a time, beating between additions. About halfway through this process, add the beaten eggs. When the mixture is a viscous sponge, beat it for 100 strokes. Cover the bowl with a wet cloth and set aside for about an hour in a warm place.

Part two: When the sponge has doubled in volume, remove the towel and, if necessary, scrape off any sponge adhering to the towel into the bowl. Add the oil, the salt, the anise seed, and the orange peel. Stir or sift the cardamom into the first cup of flour, and add the rest of the flour, one cup at a time. When the dough is too thick to stir, invert it onto a board with plenty of white flour and scrape the material from the bowl onto the dough. Knead the dough firmly and slowly, pushing down and away, then turning it. Continue to add flour to the board, kneading until the dough accepts no new flour and assumes a coherent shape. Pour about 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil into the bowl (no need to wash the bowl before doing this), plop the dough into the oiled bowl, then invert it so the oiled surface is on top. Re-wet the towel, cover the bowl, and set aside in a warm place until double in bulk.

Oil three or four bread pans. Invert the dough onto the still-floured bread board and cut into 3 or 4 parts. Knead each part a few times. Press each piece of dough into its pan, pushing it down until it fills the pan. Then take out and invert so the oiled side is on top. When all pans are filled, cover with a damp towel for 10 to 15 minutes. Cut the top of each loaf in a pleasing pattern. If desired, brush with an egg wash.

Bake for one hour at 350 degrees. When done, invert each loaf onto a cooling rack.