

ANN COVER'S COMMUNION BREAD

(Brought to us by Diane Monti-Catania)

2 cups boiling water (Pyrex in the microwave works well!)
1 cup quick oats

2/3 cups molasses
1 Tbsp salt
3 Tbsp oil

1/4 cup slightly warm water
1 teaspoon sugar
2 packages of dry yeast

About 6-7 cups of unbleached white all-purpose flour (the amount is less important than the proper consistency)

Note: I use a big mixer with a dough hook, though the recipe can just as easily be made by hand.

- Bring 2 cups water to a boil (I use a Pyrex measuring cup in the microwave).
- Add boiling water to oats in a big mixing bowl.
- Add the molasses, salt, and oil; stir, let cool to 110 degrees.
- While it is cooling, stir the sugar into the 1/4 cup slightly warm water in a separate 2-cup measuring cup, add the yeast and let it proof (watch it -- it might puff up and escape from the cup).
- Add the yeast mixture and 2 cups flour to the mixing bowl and mix on medium speed for 2 minutes.
- Add 1 cup flour and mix on high for 2 minutes, scraping bowl occasionally.
- Add flour 1/2 cup at a time and continue to mix on slow speed. Once the dough gets too unwieldy for the mixer, turn it out onto a lightly floured board and continue kneading until the dough is smooth and bounces back when pressed.
- Place the dough back in the lightly floured bowl, cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size. It will take anywhere from 1/2 to 2 hours. *(Note: if you use Rapid Rise Yeast, this time will be shorter.)*
- Turn the risen dough out on a floured board and roll it out to about an 18-inch diameter circle (fairly thin).
- Cut the circle into four quarters with a sharp knife, and fold the edges of each quarter under to form a ball, making sure the edges are pinched together underneath, using the edges of your hands to work the dough into a ball. Flatten the ball somewhat.
- Grease a large baking sheet (a cookie sheet works well), and place the four dough balls on the sheet. Use a sharp knife to cut a shallow cross in the top of each loaf.
- Cover with plastic wrap and a towel and let the loaves rise to twice their bulk. *(Note: You can cover with plastic wrap and put the loaves in the refrigerator for 2 – 24 hours. Let the loaves sit out for 20 minutes before baking.)*
- Bake at 425 for about 20 minutes until the loaves are dark brown and give a hollow "thump" when tapped on the bottom. Place on cooling racks until thoroughly cooled before wrapping.