

Irish Soda Bread

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A light, savory bread to serve with a meal or toasted for breakfast

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons caraway seed (optional)
- 1 cup raisins (optional)
- 1 3/4 cups buttermilk, well-shaken
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

Serving Ideas: Ideal with hot soup on a cold winter's night.

Carolyn T's Blog - Tasting Spoons:
<http://tastingspoons.com>

Servings: 10

If you keep powdered buttermilk on hand, you can make this just about anytime. To do that, add the buttermilk powder to the dry ingredients and instead of pouring in the liquid buttermilk, use water. I omit the caraway seeds. And, I think you could easily use half as much melted butter on top. It can be sliced while still warm. In fact it's just wonderful that way. In my convection oven, the loaves were done in 32 minutes. Over the years I've learned that biscuit dough (or any bread, roll or biscuit that's not leavened with yeast) likes a very "light touch." In other words, don't handle the dough any more than is necessary. Yes, it's sticky, but that will make it a light texture.

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Butter and flour a large baking sheet, knocking off the excess flour.
2. Sift together the flour, soda, and salt in a large bowl and stir in the sugar, caraway seeds (if you use them) and raisins.
3. Add buttermilk all at once and stir JUST until dough is evenly moistened, but still lumpy. If dough is dry, dribble a little more buttermilk until you have a sticky dough.
4. Transfer the dough to a well-floured surface and gently knead with floured hands about 8 times to form a soft, but slightly less sticky dough. Cut the dough in half and form into 2 balls. Pat out each ball into a domed 6-inch round on the baking sheet. Cut a 1/2-inch deep X on top of each loaf with a sharp knife, then brush loaves with butter.
5. Bake in the middle of the oven until golden brown and bottoms sound hollow when tapped, about 35 - 40 minutes. Transfer loaves to racks to cool completely.

Yield: 2 loaves

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 271 Calories; 3g Fat (11.1% calories from fat); 7g Protein; 53g Carbohydrate; 2g Dietary Fiber; 8mg Cholesterol; 473mg Sodium. Exchanges: 2 1/2 Grain(Starch); 0 Vegetable; 1 Fruit; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 1/2 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.