



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee!

A Cozy Weekend Dinner

January 2012

A simple beer bread is quick and easy to make with no kneading and no rising time. There are only four ingredients: beer, flour, baking powder and sugar. Butter or olive oil is optional for the top. The beer should be at room temperature. For best results, do not use a light beer such as "Bud Light".

Different types of beer, ale or stout can be used in the beer bread. A stout or dark beer will make a dark bread with a heavier flavor. Flavored beers such as a pumpkin, peach or blueberry will give the bread the subtle flavor of the beer.

Leave the dough virgin for that full beer flavor or add your favorite herbs such as fennel seed, caraway seed, rosemary, dill, sage or oregano. Further flavor enhancements can be added to the dry ingredients with the beer flavor being taken into consideration. Some suggestions include cheddar and dill, sundried tomato and basil, dried apricot and green onions.

The crust can be finished by brushing with melted butter, olive oil, cracked pepper or sea salt. For a softer crust, place hot bread in a large ziplock bag until bread cools.

Red Lentil and Black Bean Soup

4 tablespoons olive oil, divided	1 large yam, peeled and diced
1 large onion, finely diced	8 cups vegetable broth
3 large garlic cloves, minced	Two 15-ounce cans small dice tomatoes
2 tablespoons smoky paprika	4 cups water
2 tablespoons chili powder	Two 15-ounce cans black beans, rinsed
2 teaspoons cumin	6 ounces roasted red pepper (¾ cup), diced
1½ cup red lentils, rinsed	2 large cloves garlic, minced
1¼ cup rice with barley and rye	1 large lime, juiced

(Rice Select Royal Blend- Texamati)

In a large soup pot, sauté onion and garlic in 2 tablespoons olive oil for 3 to 4 minutes. Add 2 more tablespoons of olive oil, paprika, chili powder and cumin and continue to sauté until mixture is dark brown. Stir in lentils, rice, yam, vegetable broth, tomatoes and water. Cover and reduce heat. Simmer until lentils and rice are cooked, about 40 minutes. (May need to add additional water during cooking.) Add beans, additional garlic and roasted red pepper; simmer 3 to 5 minutes until heated through. Remove from heat and add lime juice. Let set for 5 to 10 minutes if time allows for flavors to mellow.

Winter Salad

2 cups green cabbage, shredded	¾ cup roasted walnuts, coarsely chopped
1 cup spinach, shredded	¼ cup cream cheese, softened
1 cup Swiss Chard, shredded	¼ cup jalapeno mint jelly
1 pear, diced	

To make dressing: using an electric mixer, blend cream cheese and jelly until creamy and smooth. Just before serving mix greens and pear, pour dressing over greens and toss lightly. Sprinkle walnuts on top and serve.

Apple-Cheddar Beer Bread

½ cup Gala apple, shredded peeled	4 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon olive oil	2 teaspoons baking powder
½ cup shallots, minced	1½ teaspoons salt
¼ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper	1 cup (4-ounces) medium cheddar cheese, shredded
1 garlic clove, minced	One 12-ounce bottle hard apple cider
3 cups all purpose flour	2 tablespoons melted butter, divided

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place peeled and shredded apple in paper towels; squeeze until barely moist. Heat oil in a small skillet over medium heat and cook apple and shallots for 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in pepper and garlic; cook 1 minute.

Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in large bowl, stirring with a whisk; make a well in center of mixture. Add shallot mixture, cheese and cider to flour mixture, stirring until moist. Let batter rest 5 minutes.

Spoon batter into a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan coated with cooking spray. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of butter over batter. Bake at 375°F for 35 minutes. Drizzle remaining 1 tablespoon butter over batter and bake 25 minutes longer or until a deep golden brown and a wooden pick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool in pan 5 minutes on a wire rack; remove from pan. Cool completely on wire rack.

Variations:

Sopressata-Asiago Beer Bread

Substitute 2 tablespoons chopped green onions for apple; ¼ (3-ounces) shredded Asiago cheese and 2 ounces finely chopped Sopressata salami for cheddar cheese; Italian lager beer for hard apple cider.

Manchego-Jalapeno Beer Bread

Substitute ¼ cup thinly sliced green onion and ¼ cup finely chopped jalapeno pepper for apple and shallots; 1 cup (4-ounces) shredded Manchego cheese for cheddar cheese; One 12-ounce bottle Mexican beer for hard apple cider.

Stout Chocolate-Cherry Bread

4¼ cups bread flour, divided	½ cup dried tart cherries
One 12-ounce chocolate stout ***	4-ounces semi-sweet baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
1 package dry yeast (about 2¼ teaspoons)	1 teaspoon water
1 tablespoon granulated sugar	1 large egg white, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon salt	

Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine 2 cups flour, beer, and yeast in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight.

Remove mixture from refrigerator; let stand 1 hour. To the yeast mixture add 2 cups flour, 1 tablespoon granulated sugar and salt; stir until a soft dough forms. Turn dough out onto a floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic (about 8 minutes); add enough remaining flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, to prevent dough from sticking to hands (dough will feel tacky). Knead in cherries and chocolate.

Place dough in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°F) from drafts, 1 hour or until doubled in size. Punch dough down; cover and let rest 5 minutes. Shape dough into a 9-inch round; place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Lightly coat dough with cooking spray. Cover and let rise 1 hour or until doubled in size.

Uncover the dough. Combine water and egg white, stirring with a whisk, and brush over dough. Make a ¼ inch deep cut down the center of the dough with a sharp knife. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or until bread is browned on bottom and sounds hollow when tapped. Remove from pan; cool on wire rack.