

Adult Baking Contest Recipe

Crusty Old-World Sesame Braid

Note: Please bring loaf wrapped in plastic wrap for judging and bring the label from the King Arthur flour bag. This recipe is best started the day before you serve it. See the recipe on the King Arthur website for recipe tips.

Starter

1 cup (227g) cool water, about 65°F
2 cups (240g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
1/4 teaspoon instant yeast

Dough

1/2 cup (113g) cool water, about 65°F
2 to 2 1/2 cups (240g to 300g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
2 teaspoons instant yeast (remainder of yeast packet, if using one)
1 1/2 teaspoons (9g) salt
1 large egg white, mixed with 1 tablespoon (14g) water
1/4 cup (35g) sesame seeds

1. To make the starter: Combine all starter ingredients, mixing just until cohesive dough forms. Let rest, covered, for 12 to 16 hours at room temperature. When starter is ready, it will be filled with large holes and bubbles.
2. To make the dough: Add water to starter and mix until smooth. Add flour, yeast and salt and knead dough until it's fairly smooth but not necessarily elastic, about 3 minutes by machine, or 5 minutes by hand. (The gluten will continue to develop as the dough rises, so you don't want to develop it fully during the kneading process.)
3. Place dough in lightly greased bowl, cover, and let rise at room temperature for 1 1/2 hours. Turn the dough twice during rising time: gently fold all 4 sides into middle and turn dough over.
4. Divide the dough in thirds and roll each third into a 20-inch-long rope. Braid ropes. Set braid on lightly greased or parchment-lined baking sheet, cover with greased plastic wrap and let rise 1 to 1 1/2 hours, until just puffy.
5. Preheat oven to 425°F. Gently brush braid with beaten egg white mixture and sprinkle generously with sesame seeds. Bake for 25 to 35 minutes or until loaf is golden and feels lighter when picked up. Let cool completely on rack before eating.