

Grandma's Cinnamon Raisin Bread
adapted from Grandma and *The Bread Bible*
makes 2 loaves

the sponge

- 1 cup nonfat milk
- 3/4 cup warm water
- 3/4 teaspoon yeast
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon honey

Pour the milk in a small saucepan and scald (bring to steaming). Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Sprinkle the yeast over the warm water and set aside for five minutes to proof the yeast. Combine the cooled milk, yeast mixture, flours and honey in a mixing bowl. Stir vigorously until the mixture is very smooth. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and cover with a plate or plastic wrap. Allow to sit at room temperature for at least an hour and up to 1 day.

the dough

- 2 cups plus 3 tablespoons unbleached flour
- 3/4 teaspoon yeast
- 9 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened
- 2 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 1 cup raisins

Whisk together the flour (reserve 1/4 cup flour if kneading by hand) and yeast. Pour the flour mixture over the sponge, cover once more, and allow to sit for 1 to 4 hours. The sponge will begin to interact with the flour mixture and may bubble through in a few places.

Add the butter, raisins (if using), and salt to the bowl.

- If using a mixer, knead with the dough hook on low speed until mixture is well incorporated. Continue kneading for another 5 minutes.
- If kneading by hand, use the reserved flour to flour a cutting board. Transfer the dough to the cutting board. Knead for 8 - 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and stretchy.

Transfer the dough to an oiled bowl to rise. Cover the container and set in a warm place for 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until the dough has doubled in size. Once doubled, take dough from the bowl and set on a floured board. Gently flatten into a rectangular shape, taking care not to press all the air bubbles from within the dough. Fold the dough in thirds and place back in the bowl for a second rise. Allow to rise for 1 hour in the refrigerator. This will firm the dough and make it easier to roll.

the cinnamon sugar spiral filling

- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

shape the dough

Generously butter two 4 x 8 inch bread pans. Set aside. Place the dough on a floured board. Cut it in half and set one half aside. Roll one piece of dough into a rectangle 7 inches wide by 14 inches long. Use your fingertips to gently dimple the surface of the dough. Brush the dough with egg, leaving a 3/4 inch border around the edge of the dough. Sprinkle the dough with 1/2 of the cinnamon mixture. Tightly roll the dough from the shorter side until the entire rectangle is part of the spiral. Tightly pinch the end onto the roll to attach. Place the rolled dough seam side down in one of the prepared pans. Repeat with the other piece of dough.

Loosely cover the loaves with a floured towel or plastic wrap. Set in a warm place to rise for 1- 2 hours until the dough is 1 1/2 inches above the sides of the pan. Brush tops with beaten egg.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Slide bread pans into the oven. Bake for 50 minutes or until bread is medium brown. Remove from oven. Unmold the loaves and allow to cool on a wire rack until barely warm. Slice and enjoy.