

Easy French Bread (Alexis Howard – Kelsi's roommate)

2½ c. very warm water	2 T. cooking oil
2 T. sugar	6 c. flour, stirred and measured
1 t. salt	2 T. dry yeast (2 pkg.)

Into a large warm mixing bowl, pour warm water, then stir in sugar, salt, oil, half the flour, and yeast. Beat vigorously 2 or 3 minutes. Stir in remaining flour until all dry ingredients are completely mixed in, leaving spoon right in heavy batter.

Allow dough to rest 10 minutes, and then stir down. Allow dough to rest another 10 minutes, and then stir down. Repeat this process until dough has been stirred down five times.

Turn dough onto floured board; knead only enough to coat dough with flour so it can be handled. Divide into two parts. Roll each part of dough into rectangle about 9 x 12 inches and roll up like a jelly roll rolling from long side. Pinch edge of loaf to seal the dough. Arrange lengthwise on large cookie sheet that has been sprinkled with corn meal, allowing room for both loaves. Cover lightly and let rise at room temperature for 30 minutes.

With very sharp knife, cut three gashes at an angle on top then brush entire surface with slightly beaten whole egg (optional). If desired, sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds.

Bake immediately at 400° for 25-30 minutes or until brown. Remove from baking sheets immediately and cool on racks. Top with butter (optional) and serve.

Makes two loaves.