



Sugar Apple

Posts From The Caribbean

Almost Parisian Bread

This is the shorter, 4 hour version of the NY Times recipe. ~~The original recipe called for using a 6 to 8 quart pot for baking, but I have a round 3 1/2 quart Le Creuset pot which does the job beautifully.~~ (Update: I've decided bigger is better when it comes to the pot. It seems to make for a better crust.) Because the pot gets so hot, the dough won't stick. I haven't tried this with all-purpose flour yet. I had to go to *five* stores yesterday to find bread flour on the island. Make the effort to find bread flour. You will be rewarded.

3 cups of bread flour

2 1/2 teaspoons or 1 package of instant yeast (I use SAF Instant brand)

1 1/2 teaspoons of salt

1 1/2 cups of water

olive oil or cooking oil

Put the flour, yeast and salt into a large bowl and mix it together. Add the water and mix it all together with a fork. The dough will look a bit ragged but it's fine as long as all the water is mixed in with the flour. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the dough rise at room temperature for 4 hours (should be at least 70° or so, our room temperature is usually about 85° here in the Caribbean).

Preheat your oven to 450° and place a heavy covered pot in the oven to preheat (I used a Le Creuset cast iron pot but whatever pot you use should have a tight fitting lid. It's the steam in the pot that will create the crackling crust so you want a good lid.).

Lightly oil a clean counter or other work surface (I used the marble slab my parents gave me for rolling out pie crusts.). Turn the dough out onto the counter and fold the dough over onto itself in thirds a few times. Cover it loosely with plastic wrap and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.

Remove your (very hot, be careful) pot from the oven and deposit the dough into the pot. Shake the pan to even the dough out but don't worry, it will straighten itself out as it bakes.

Cover with the lid and bake for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, remove the lid and bake for 15-20 minutes longer, until the loaf is browned and the lovely fresh-baked bread aroma is killing you. Remove the loaf from the pan and cool on a rack. Enjoy. And tell me it isn't one of the best loaves you've ever eaten.

<http://www.abigailblake.com/sugarapple>

from the article *The Best Bread on Tortola* posted on April 19, 2009