



## Easy Multigrain Sandwich Bread

Some multigrain bread is better suited to propping open a door than making a sandwich. We wanted a light but flavorful loaf--and we didn't want to spend all day making it.

**The Problem:** Too often multigrain bread has great flavor, but the quantity of ingredients weighs it down so much that the loaf becomes as dense and as heavy as a brick. On the other end of the spectrum are loaves with a nice, light sandwich-style texture but so little grain that they're hard to distinguish from plain old white bread.

**The Goal:** We wanted a multigrain bread with great flavor and a light texture. We also wanted a recipe that would require just a few hours in the kitchen and no special equipment.

**The Solution:** Our first challenge was to develop more gluten (a protein made when flour and water are mixed and that gives baked goods structure) in the dough, as early tests showed that the whole grains were impeding its development. Because the protein content of any flour is an indicator of how much gluten it will produce, we thought first to switch out all-purpose flour for higher-protein bread flour. But bread flour only made the bread chewier, not less dense. The solution to the problem was twofold: Long kneading preceded by an autolyse, a resting period just after the initial mixing of water and flour that gives flour time to hydrate. This step proved vital, not only ramping up the development of gluten (which depends on water) but also making the dough less tacky and so easier to work with. The result was a loaf that baked up light yet chewy, without being tough. Now that we had just the right texture, we had to figure out the best way to incorporate grains into the bread. After driving from store to store to collect a variety of individual grains, we finally hit upon a convenient, one-stop-shopping alternative: packaged 7-grain cereal. When added to the dough straight from the package, some of the grains remained quite hard. The simple solution was to make a thick porridge with the cereal before adding it to the dough. A final step of rolling the shaped loaves in oats yielded a finished, professional look.

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## Multigrain Bread

Don't confuse 7-grain hot cereal mix with boxed, cold breakfast cereals that may also be labeled "7-grain." Our favorite brands of 7-grain mix are Bob's Red Mill and Arrowhead Mills. Leftover bread can be wrapped in a double layer of plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for 3 days; wrap with an additional layer of aluminum foil and the bread can be frozen for up to one month.

Makes two 9 by 5-inch loaves

- 6 1/4 ounces 7-grain hot cereal mix , 1 1/4 cups, (see note above)
- 20 ounces boiling water (2 1/2 cups)
- 15 ounces unbleached all-purpose flour (3 cups), plus extra for dusting work surface
- 7 1/2 ounces whole wheat flour (1 1/2 cups)
- 4 tablespoons honey
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter , melted and cooled slightly
- 2 1/2 teaspoons instant yeast
- 1 tablespoon table salt
- 3/4 cup pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds, (unsalted)
- 1/2 cup old-fashioned rolled oats or quick oats

1. Place cereal mix in bowl of standing mixer and pour boiling water over it; let stand, stirring occasionally, until mixture cools to 100 degrees and resembles thick porridge, about 1 hour. Whisk flours in medium bowl.

2. Once grain mixture has cooled, add honey, melted butter, and yeast and stir to combine. Attach bowl to standing mixer fitted with dough hook. With mixer running on low speed, add flours, 1/2 cup at a time, and knead until dough forms ball, 1 1/2 to 2 minutes; cover bowl with plastic and let dough rest 20 minutes. Add salt and knead on medium-low speed until dough clears sides of bowl, 3 to 4 minutes (if it does not clear sides, add 2 to 3 tablespoons additional all-purpose flour and continue mixing); continue to knead dough for 5 more minutes. Add seeds and knead for another 15 seconds. Transfer dough to floured work surface and knead by hand until seeds are dispersed evenly and dough forms smooth, taut ball. Place dough into greased container with 4-quart capacity; cover with plastic wrap and allow to rise until doubled, 45 to 60 minutes.

3. Adjust oven rack to middle position; heat oven to 375 degrees. Spray two 9 by 5-inch loaf pans with nonstick cooking spray. Transfer dough to lightly floured work surface and pat into 12 by 9-inch rectangle; cut dough in half crosswise with knife or bench scraper. Follow illustrations 1 through 3 below to shape loaves and coat with oats; cover lightly with plastic wrap and let rise until almost doubled in size, 30 to 40 minutes. (Dough should barely spring back when poked with knuckle.) Bake until internal temperature registers 200 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove loaves from pans and cool on wire rack before slicing, about 3 hours.

### STEP BY STEP: Loaves' Labors Lost

We wanted a multigrain bread with great flavor and a light, fluffy texture. Few of the recipes we found came through on both counts. Here are two of the offenders.

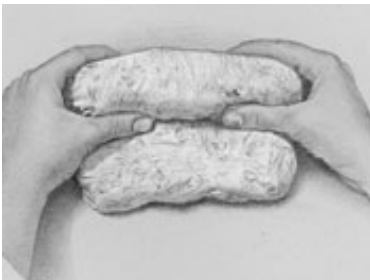


**LIKE A BRICK:** Great flavor, but a laundry list of ingredients weighs the loaf down into a dense, brick-like solid.



**LIKE WHITE BREAD:** Fluffy sandwich-style texture, but so little grain it's almost like plain old white bread.

### STEP BY STEP: Getting the Loaf into Shape



1. With short side facing you, starting at farthest end, roll dough piece into log. Keep roll taut by tucking it under itself as you go.



2. To seal loaf, pinch seam gently with thumb and forefinger. Spray loaves lightly with water or nonstick cooking spray.



3. Roll each dough log in oats to coat evenly. Place loaf seam-side down in greased loaf pan, pressing gently into corners.

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## Multigrain Dinner Rolls

Don't confuse 7-grain hot cereal mix with boxed, cold breakfast cereals that may also be labeled 7-grain. Our favorite brands of 7-grain mix are Bob's Red Mill and Arrowhead Mills. Leftover rolls can be wrapped in a double layer of plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for 3 days; wrapped with an additional layer of aluminum foil, the rolls can be frozen for up to one month. This recipe works for a 9 by 13-inch baking dish or two 9 by 9-inch baking dishes.

Makes 18 individual rolls

- 6 1/4 ounces 7-grain hot cereal mix , 1 1/4 cups, (see note above)
- 20 ounces boiling water (2 1/2 cups)
- 15 ounces unbleached all-purpose flour (3 cups), plus extra for dusting work surface
- 7 1/2 ounces whole wheat flour (1 1/2 cups)
- 4 tablespoons honey
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter , melted and cooled slightly
- 2 1/2 teaspoons instant yeast
- 1 tablespoon table salt
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3. Adjust oven rack to middle position; heat oven to 375 degrees. Spray two 9 by 9-inch baking pans with nonstick cooking spray. Transfer dough to lightly floured work surface and cut in half crosswise with knife or bench scraper. Cut each half into thirds, then into thirds again, to make 18 even sized pieces of dough. Gently roll each piece in circular motion to make round, then roll one side of dough in oats and place in baking pan, oat side up. Repeat to fill both baking pans with nine rolls each. Cover lightly with plastic wrap and let rise until almost doubled in size, 30 to 40 minutes. (Dough should barely spring back when poked with knuckle.) Bake until internal temperature registers 200 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove rolls from pans and cool on wire rack before serving, about 2 hours.

## STEP BY STEP: Multigrain Dinner Rolls



Bake rolls in a tightly packed dish to minimize the amount of crust on each roll.