

Gala's Texas Sweet Sourdough Apricot & White Chocolate Bread

This Recipe has a really different twist about how I was able to get it. My good Friends, the Holdemans, Ragan, Gala, and their children, Chiara and Lemont lived across the road from our Ranch at Clarksville at the time, since moving to El Campo and this seems a World away.

The Mennonite women are fantastic cooks, among many of their other wonderful traits and Gala certainly qualifies as a GOOD COOK. She also put up all kinds of home jellies, preserves and ect...it is YUM when you go to their home for supper.....

From time to time, I go to Fort Worth (the big City) and when returning I attempt to bring back a few things from Central Market or Whole Foods that are not available in this area. One of the delicious things I found was the White Chocolate – Apricot Bread from Central. Knowing I could not eat it, I would bring a loaf to Ragan and this had gone on for a couple years or so. I tried several times to make the bread however my recipe never came out anywhere near the Central Recipe; more like a cake than bread; those I found on the Internet were the same way. One trip to Fort Worth the Holdeman Family was with me and I saw Gala reading the ingredients of the bread; she too had been experimenting with recipes to make the bread and I though nothing about it until Ragan called and ask me to come over to his house right now because Gala had just made a loaf of the White Chocolate Bread and it was exactly like the one from Central. OVER I DASHED, tripping on myself as I charged out the door and,WOW.....it was perfect. YUM,,,,,she had not used much salt and had used healthy oil, just for me she might normally use Cow Butter, in the recipe and, of course, being Heart Healthy and the glutton I am I ate nearly their entire loaf. Sorry about that but it was YUMMY.....getting hungry just typing and thinking about it.

The three of us had a long conversation about the Bread and as I was departing for their home Gala handed me a printed copy of her Recipe. So, below, you have her recipe with a few little changes I have noted because I cannot leave anything alone; hers is about perfect. I have two loafs in the oven as I am typing; one for tonight for a going away party for Ragan and Gala and one to put on the seat of his truck so at 6 AM so when he gets in, BAM, it will be the first thing he see. They are moving to South Texas tomorrow hopefully not to get away from me? Really a sad day in the entire area because they are departing here....not good....

Just a little about the Mennonites for those of you that are not privileged to have a Congregation of these really fine, wonderful Christian people living next to you. What great friends I feel I have in this Congregation.

They all have gardens and, really good gardens, with most having fruit and nut trees and a variety of berry bushes. One man recently told me he took the first picking of tomatoes to his Mother for canning and, here he stressed it was just the FIRST picking, there were 42 quarts of canned tomatoes. He is planning to harvest several more picking and, just guessing here, they will end up with 100 to 200 quarts. And, with out fail, these are sharing people.

It is really difficult to stop by one of their houses without departing with some type of gift or eating some hot cookies, bread or ice tea while there. Yesterday, I stopped to discuss a construction project and BAM, I departed with two enormous sacks of sweet corn...WOW....it was delicious.

I can go on and on about the Mennonites and why I feel the Lord put me here on this Ranch next to them. I know things do not happen by chance and, here I am. What a Blessing to be living next to the Mennonites. What can't they do? I have not yet found anything they can not and do not do from manufacturing the World's Largest Earth Scrapers for coal mines, fertilizer plants, flour mills, slaughter plants, mechanic shops, irrigation systems and about anything you can name including the World's Best Farmers. They can do it all and do it WELL!

I could go on and on but Enough, now to the recipe. All of you know I have to tinker some with recipes but this one is perfect. The only changes I have made are the size and a special King Author Shine Spray where the Recipe calls for a homemade shine recipe. Being frugal the Mennonites save money by making a home made browning spray where I go the more expensive, easier, way. The Mennonites have the money but they save it so they will have more to use to help others. How about that for a novel idea?

BARNEY'S RECIPE

This Bread uses a starter, the recipe is below. This starter gives it a boost and also a sour dough flavor to go with the sweetness of the Apricots and White Chocolate. YUMMY! I keep adding to my starter and it keeps getting a little more sour as the days pass. Sure makes for a novel loaf....sour and sweet and, in mine, no salt.

Starter:

- Tablespoon of dry yeast.
- 5&1/2 cups warm water (not hot, warm).
- 1/3 cup sugar.
- 3 Tablespoons of Potato flakes (must be flakes).

Mix together in a large jar. (I used a large glass bowl I purchased at a Flea Market because I did not have a glass jar). Set in a warm sunny area for 4 hours. Mixture will be hissing (this is Mennonite phraseology for lots of bubbles).

SIDE NOTES HERE: Use a whisk to stir the ingredients very well, put saran wrap over the bowl and put it into the sun. What hissing means is the mixture will be bubbling and popping when the yeast is working well and ready to be used. If the area is warm enough it might not take four hours, JUST WATCH IT TO BE SURE. Do not put HOT water in with your yeast, sugar and potato flour mixture because hot water will kill yeast.

I purchase my yeast at Sam's. No place else even comes remotely close to Sam's price for yeast. Just put it in a jar and keep it in your freezer; it keeps indefinitely frozen. You can purchase two large packages at Sam's for the price of a small bottle at the grocery. I have never had any go bad from age.

BREAD RECIPE.....

- cup starter (use only one, please, I just save the rest).
- 1 & 1/2 cups warm water.

- 2 teaspoons Salt (NO I, DO NOT USE salt and, if you feel you must, try 1 teaspoon, guarantee it will be enough).
- 1/2 cup Canola Oil (I use light olive oil, light does not impart any flavor and it is a shade more Heart Healthy- thus I can eat more however, it is excellent with the Canola Oil).
- 2 teaspoons yeast.
- 1/3 cup Sugar (can use a spot more or less, your choice, I, go for more and it is YUMMY)!
- 9 cups Bread Flour (don't have Bread Flour, use regular flour and a 4&1/2 Tablespoons of Vital Wheat Gluten and you will be just fine.
- cup White Chocolate Chips (not nearly enough for my taste, go with 1&1/2 to 2 cups of White Chocolate Chips, just me) some chips are better because they do not melt as easy inside your bread.
- 1 cup dried Apricots (cut and rolled in flour) Once again I feel that 1 cup is not enough and would go with 1&1/2 to 2 cups. These can be cut ahead while your bread is rising or cooking. What size you ask, about the size of a yellow pencil and the length of your little finger joint.

(I cheat here and use 2 cups starter and ½ cup warm water because I cannot stand the thought of not using more starter and, after several days the Sour Dough really gives it, to me, a fantastic flavor.

YOU MAY WANT TO MAKE A ½ RECIPE THE FIRST TIME OR BE PREPARED TO GIVE SOME AWAY OR FREEZE IT.

GALA'S ORIGINAL RECIPE

DIRECTIONS: I recommend that you make it EXACTLY like Gala has it written to see how it comes out of your oven, how it looks and if you like it. It sure is DELICIOUS.

Mix the first six ingredients. Add Flour. Add more if needed. (if too dry, add more starter) Mix or knead for 5 minutes. (I prefer a mixer here although today I used my hands).

Put your dough in a warm place to rise, I prefer, my oven with the light on. This produces a 100 degree temperature in the oven and that is great for me. You can just leave it on the counter in a warm spot if you want. Barbara's oven is too hot with the light on and it melts the chocolate. Be Careful.....

Make ready two cookie sheets by covering them with parchment paper....don't have it, the King will and it is already cut to fit. I HATE TO ATTEMPT TO CUT THE PAPER....just my goofy personality.

Let your Dough rise until it is double. Punch it down and divide into 4 equal loafs of dough.

To each lump of dough add ¼ cup apricots and ¼ cup White Chocolate Chips. (I would try it like this the first time however; I attempt to use double the amount Gala uses because I like Apricots and White Chocolate) Try it her way the first time.

Fold the Apricot pieces and White Chocolate Chips into the dough placing upon a greased cookie sheet when finished. I put two pieces to each cookie sheet. (Here I recommend that you use baking paper (parchment) because it really helps with the clean up and is so much easier).

When all the breads are formed, mix

- cup water.
- 1 tsp. baking soda very well.
- Put this into a sprayer and wet loafs with the baking soda mixture then sprinkle the loafs with raw sugar.

Place in a warm place to rise.

When double in size bake in a 400 degree oven for 25 minutes or until done.

VARIATION... Use dried cranberries, dried blueberries, ect instead of dried apricots. You may also try toasted, chopped pecans.

I WILL BE EXPECTING A REPORT ABOUT HOW YOURS HAS COME OUT!!!! FEW, GIVE ME FEED BACK AND I NEED IT.

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