

PAIN RUSTIQUE

(from Hamelman's Bread)

For the polish

1 lb bread flour (3 + 5/8 cup)

1 lb water (2 cups)

1/4 tsp instant dry yeast



For the dough:

all the polish made the previous day (about 2 lb)

6.1 oz water (3/4 cup)

1 lb bread flour (3 + 5/8 cup)

0.6 oz salt (1 Tbs)

0.17 oz yeast (1 + 1/2 tsp)

Make the polish the day before: add water to a bowl, sprinkle the yeast on top, add the flour and mix until smooth with a large spoon. Cover with plastic wrap and let it stand at room temperature for 12 to 16 hours (ideal temperature: 70 F).

Prepare the dough: add the flour, water and fermented polish to the bowl of a Kitchen Aid-type mixer. Do not add the yeast or the salt yet. Mix on first speed (or by hand) until it all comes together in a shaggy-looking mass. Cover the bowl and let this mixture rest for 20 to 30 minutes.

Add the salt and the yeast over the dough, turn the mixer to the second speed and mix for 2 minutes. Ideally, the temperature of the dough should reach about 76 F. If kneading by hand, then work the dough until smooth, about 6 minutes.

Cover the bowl and let it rest for 25 minutes. Give a quick couple of folds to the dough, let it rest 25 more minutes. Fold the dough a couple of times again, and let it rest 20-25 minutes more, undisturbed.

Gently divide the dough into two pieces, trying not to deflate it too much, and place them over lightly floured kitchen towels. Cover, and let them stay for 20 to 25 minutes

at room temperature, for a final quick proofing. No need to shape the loaves in any particular way.

Invert the dough over parchment paper, so that the floured side is now up. Slash the bread quickly with a single stroke of a razor blade or sharp knife.

Bake the loaves in a 460F oven, with steam (add ice cubes to a baking pan placed at the bottom of the oven, or use any method of your choice to add steam in the initial baking time). The bread will be ready in about 35 minutes. Let them cool completely on a rack before slicing.