

St-Patricks-Day

Cheesy, whole wheat and more: 5 easy Irish soda bread recipes for St. Patrick's Day

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If baking bread intimidates you — the thought of all that kneading and rising — give Irish soda bread a try. With about five minutes of prep involved (and no rise time at all), it's startlingly easy, yet an impressive addition to any St. Patrick's Day feast. So if you're heading to a St. Patty's party, volunteer to bring the soda bread and give one of these recipes a try. You might find that one of these breads — from cheddar and herb to gluten-free — becomes part of your year-round recipe rotation.



Courtesy of John Mooney

5. Traditional Irish soda bread: Don't worry, we didn't forget about the classic version. If you want to try the real-deal, check out this third-generation recipe that chef John Mooney, of Bell Book & Candle in New York City and Bidwell in Washington, D.C., shared with TODAY.com. The chef is 100 percent Irish, and the recipe was handed down from his grandmother, to his mother, to him. Make it with just the raisins, just the caraway, or both, he says: "However your taste buds sway you."

Ella's Irish soda bread

Courtesy of chef John Mooney, Bell Book & Candle, New York City; Bidwell, Washington, D.C.

- 2 cups seedless raisins
- 6 cups sifted flour
- 3 teaspoons caraway seeds
- 3 cups buttermilk
- 1 cup margarine (2 sticks)
- 6 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 tablespoons of sugar

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Rinse raisins in hot water, and then drain well.
2. Sift together all dry ingredients. Cut in margarine until a coarse, mealy consistency.
3. Add buttermilk, raisins and caraway seeds. Stir all ingredients.
4. Turn dough into a greased 8-inch round cast iron skillet and make a crisscross on the top.
5. Bake in preheated oven on 400 degrees F for 1 hour or until golden. Test with a toothpick (a toothpick inserted in the center of the bread should come out clean). Serve with sweet cream butter or clotted cream (clotted cream is a very thick cream available at some grocery stores and gourmet food stores).