The Blackboard

CHOCOLATE, CHILLI & LIME

BREAD

Preparation time: 40 minutes Proving time: 35 minutes Cooking time: 20–25 minutes Use: 900g (2lb) loaf tin

15g (3/4 oz) active dried yeast

25g (1oz) brown sugar

400ml (14fl oz) warm water

450g (1lb) strong white bread flour

1 teaspoon salt

125g (4¹/₂ oz) dark chocolate, minimum 60% cocoa solids, chopped

11/2 fresh limes

1 dried red chilli pepper

50ml (2fl oz) olive oil

Mix together the yeast, sugar and 200ml (7fl oz) warm water to activate the yeast. Set aside in a warm place for about 15 minutes

Sift the flour and salt into a mixing bowl. Add the chocolate and the zest of one of the limes. Thinly slice and chop the lime, skin on, and add half to the mixture with the juice from the other half lime. De-seed and finely chop the chilli pepper and add to the mixture. Add in the olive oil and mix roughly.

Once the yeast has become activated and frothed up, add it to the mixture and mix thoroughly by hand.

As the liquid is absorbed, add a further 50ml (2fl oz) of the warm water and continue to mix. When a dough ball starts to form, use your judgement to add as much of the remaining warm water as required. The dough should be moist but not wet. If the dough becomes too wet, sprinkle in some extra flour to absorb the excess moisture. Continue to work the dough for 15 minutes.

Place the dough on a floured baking tray. Cover with a clean damp dishcloth and leave in a warm place for at least 20 minutes to prove.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.

Lightly oil the loaf tin with olive oil and put the dough in it, pressing down and shaping, not too firmly, then turn off the oven and place the tin in the oven to stand for a further 15 minutes.

Then turn the oven back on again and preheat to $220^{\circ}\text{C}/425^{\circ}\text{F}/\text{gas}$ mark 7 and bake for 20 minutes.

After 20 minutes, turn the bread out of the tin and tap the bottom with a wooden spoon — it should sound hollow. If it does, place the loaf on a wire rack to cool; if it doesn't, return to the oven (without the tin) for a further 5 minutes.

HINT: Proving bread requires moisture and warmth and no draughts.

If the temperature is too low, the yeast is slow to react; too high and it will die.

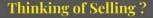
The best place to prove dough is, of course, the airing cupboard.







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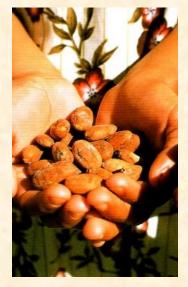
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From 1983 through to 2009, Jasmine Sergeant enjoyed a successful career both as a Fine Dining Chef and as a Hospitality Consultant.