

Milk Bread

Fluffy Japanese Milk Bread (Shokupan) made with tangzhong technique. Soft, pillowy texture perfect for sandwiches or toast. Easy homemade recipe!

20 min
PREP

40 min
COOK

1h
TOTAL

8
SERVINGS

Medium
DIFFICULTY

Milk Bread

Ingredients

- 3 cup flour
- 6 tbsp water
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 pack yeast
- 1 tsp salt

Instructions

- 1 Make the tangzhong**

Whisk together 6 tablespoons flour and 1 cup water in a small saucepan until completely smooth with no lumps. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, for 3-5 minutes until the mixture thickens to a paste-like consistency that coats your whisk.
- 2** Transfer the tangzhong to a bowl and press plastic wrap directly onto the surface to prevent a skin from forming. Cool completely to room temperature, about 30 minutes.
- 3 Make the dough**

Combine 3 cups flour, 3 tablespoons sugar, 1 packet yeast, and 1 teaspoon salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook. Mix on low speed for 30 seconds to distribute evenly.
- 4** Add the cooled tangzhong, 1 egg, and 1 cup milk to the flour mixture. Knead on medium speed for 8-10 minutes until the dough is smooth, elastic, and pulls away from the sides of the bowl but remains slightly sticky.
- 5 First rise**

Shape the dough into a ball and place in a lightly oiled bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and rise in a warm place for 60-90 minutes until doubled in size.
- 6 Shape the loaf**

Punch down the dough and turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide into 3 equal portions, each about 200g.
- 7** Roll each portion into an 8x6-inch rectangle. Starting from the short end, roll up tightly into a log shape. Place all 3 logs seam-side down in a greased 9x5-inch loaf pan.

8 **Second rise**

Cover the pan with plastic wrap and rise for 45-60 minutes until the dough crowns about 1 inch above the rim of the pan.

9 **Bake**

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Brush the top of the loaf with milk for a golden crust.

10 Bake for 30-35 minutes until the top is golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center reads 190°F (88°C). If the top browns too quickly, tent with foil after 20 minutes.

11 **Cool**

Remove from oven and immediately turn out onto a wire rack. Cool completely for at least 1 hour before slicing to prevent a gummy texture.

Tips

Ensure your tangzhong cools completely to room temperature before adding to the dough. Hot tangzhong can kill the yeast and prevent proper rising.

Use bread flour instead of all-purpose flour for the best texture. The higher protein content creates better gluten development, resulting in a more structured yet tender crumb.

Test your yeast's activity by proofing it in warm milk with a pinch of sugar for 5-10 minutes. It should become foamy and fragrant before adding to the flour mixture.

Knead the dough until it passes the windowpane test - stretch a small piece until it's thin enough to see light through without tearing. This ensures proper gluten development.

Create a warm environment for rising by placing the dough in an oven with just the light on, or near a warm (not hot) radiator. Ideal temperature is around 75-80°F.

Don't skip the egg wash or milk brush before baking - this creates the beautiful golden-brown crust that's characteristic of milk bread.

Use a digital thermometer to check doneness. The internal temperature should reach 190°F when fully baked. This prevents under-baked centers.

Let the bread cool completely on a wire rack before slicing. Cutting too early releases steam and can make the texture gummy.