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Rustic Bread

Bring the comfort of homemade bread to your kitchen without the hours of kneading. This easy rustic bread is filled with whole grain goodness, naturally sweet dried fruits and a flavorful assortment of nuts. The creative combinations are endless and all contain fiber and phytonutrients, important in a cancer-protective diet.

No-Knead Rustic Bread with Fruit and Nuts

2¼ cups white whole-wheat flour or whole-wheat flour

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup dried fruit (dried cranberries, raisins, currants, cherries, chopped apricots, chopped dates)

1 cup coarsely chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds, pistachios)

1 Tbsp. cinnamon, optional

2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp instant/rapid rise yeast (not active)

1/4 cup honey

1¾ - 2 cups water, plus 1/4 cup

In large mixing bowl, stir all ingredients together until sticky dough forms, about 30 seconds. If dough is not sticky to touch, add water in 1-tablespoon increments. Dough should be somewhat tacky when touched and loose, known as being shaggy.

Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let dough sit at room temperature (about 70 degrees F) in draft free spot anywhere from 8 to 24 hours. After first rise, dough surface will be dotted with bubbles and dough will have doubled in size.

Line baking pan with parchment paper or grease pan with oil. Using your hands, gently fold in sides toward center, like closing box top flaps. Shape dough into a round loaf, similar to a French boule. Dough should feel tight and not completely spring back when poked. Lift dough from bowl in one piece and place seam side down on baking pan. Cover dough with a dishtowel and let sit 2 hours. After second rise, dough will be puffy.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place top baking rack in middle of oven and bottom rack on lowest level. In casserole dish add 1 cup hot water and place on bottom rack for steam while baking.

Bake bread 55-70 minutes. Insert cooking thermometer in thickest part of loaf. Bread is done when thermometer reads 205 degrees F. If not using thermometer, tap bread with finger. If bread sounds hollow, it is done.

Place bread on cooling rack. Let cool for easier slicing.

To store, wrap cooled bread in plastic or place in plastic bag for a few days. Bread may be sliced and frozen for quick toasting later or made into French toast.

Makes 1 (9-inch x 3-inch) boule, 22 servings.

Per serving: 149 calories, 4 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 27 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 2.5 g dietary fiber, 214 mg sodium.

