

Bacon and Cheddar Loaves

Ingredients

For the Bread

- 400gms strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting
- 100gms strong wholemeal bread flour
- 10gms salt
- 10gms instant yeast
- 30gms unsalted butter, softened
- 33mls cool water

For the filling

- Olive oil for cooking and to finish
- 8 rashers of smoked back bacon, rind removed
- 150gms Cheddar, grated.



Method

1. Tip the flours into a large mixing bowl and add the salt to one side of the bowl and the yeast to the other. Add the butter and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the water and turn the mixture round with your fingers.
2. Continue to add the remaining water, a little at a time until you have picked up all the flour from the sides of the bowl. You may not need to add all the water, or you may need to add a little more – you want dough that is soft, but not soggy. Use the mixture to clean the inside of the bowl and keep going until the mixture forms a rough dough.
3. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and begin to knead. Keep kneading for 5-10 minutes. Work through the initial wet stage until the dough starts to form a soft, smooth skin.
4. Put it into a lightly oiled bowl. Cover with a tea towel and leave to rise until at least doubled in size – at least 1 hour, but it's fine to leave it for 2 or even 3 hours.
5. Meanwhile, for the filling, heat a little olive oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the bacon and cook gently on both sides until tender. Remove and set aside to cool, then chop.
6. Line 2 baking trays with baking parchment or silicone paper.
7. Once the dough is risen, add the bacon and cheese to it and knead in until well distributed. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface. And knead briefly, pushing any pieces of bacon or cheese that bounce out back in.
8. Divide the dough into 4 pieces and shape into ovals, about 2.5cm thick, tapering the ends of the loaves into points. Place 2 dough ovals on each tray, spacing them apart. Dust the loaves with flour and deeply slash the tops lengthways.
9. Put each tray inside a clean plastic bag and leave to prove for 1 hour, or until the dough is at least doubled in size and springs back quickly if you prod it lightly with your finger. Meanwhile, heat your oven to 220°C.
10. Sprinkle the loaves with a little olive oil and bake for 20 minutes until golden brown. Eat warm.