

Millet Bread

During the Middle Ages, millet was a low cost cash crop. It was used as animal feed, but it was also used to make inexpensive bread. There are two issues with flour made from millet – it has very low gluten content, so it will not rise or hold together as large loaves. It also has a very strong taste which is not pleasant to the modern taste pallet.

Dough made from millet flour will form small, flat loaves. The dough is soft and pliable, but will not support the structure as large loaves, but will produce large biscuit sized breads. This bread can be baked quickly in a hot oven.

Recipe 1 (Authentic)

- Mix 200 grams of millet flour with 6 grams of dry yeast, and add warm water to form a stiff dough.
- Leave to rise in a warm place for about an hour then knock back and knead until the dough resists pressure.
- Leave to rise for half an hour and knead thoroughly again. Roll the dough into small balls and flatten onto a dry baking sheet. Leave to rise until about doubled in size.
- Bake in a hot oven at 210°C for 12-15 minutes. Cool on a baking tray.

Recipe 2 (Adjusted)

- Mix 100 grams of millet flour with 150 grams of strong wholemeal flour and 6 grams of dried yeast. Add a pinch of salt. Add warm water and mix to a stiff dough.
- Leave to rise for an hour then knock back and knead thoroughly.
- Form on a dry baking tray into small flat loaves about 15cm round and 1cm thick.
- Bake in a hot oven at 200°C 15 minutes. Cool on a baking tray.

Millet bread would have been used as a sop when eating vegetable stew or other stewed dishes. Austere orders would have one main meal a day, washed down with ale – a weak brew that was safer to drink than water.

