

The Square Loaf

By the end of the 18th Century, the metal loaf tin had been invented. This allowed bakers to put the bread dough after the second kneading directly into a container for baking. Handling tins in an oven was more consistent than using naked dough lumps. The new baking tin allowed more bread to be baked at a time and gave a consistent shaped loaf which was easy to stack, wrap and cut.

Few bakers understood the method of use for this new idea until advice was published in "Mrs Rundell".

Maria E. K. Rundell, 1807, New System of Domestic Cookery: Founded upon Principles of Economy; and Adapted to the Use of Private Families. London.

At the start of the 19th Century bakers nationwide embraced the new bread baking tins and the square loaf was established forever in British baking.



The first loaf tins were made out of tin lined steel sheet, folded into a suitable shape, slightly wider at the top and with the top exposed edge folded over outwards. Early loaves were slightly wider than the modern loaf shape, which evolved very quickly.

White bread and wholemeal bread were standard loaves that were baked in tins. The loaf tin took 2 Pounds of dough to make a standard loaf. The loaf would rise and form a round top above the tin, giving the characteristic loaf shape that we recognise today.

Slices bread was not produced until 1928 with the invention of the Rohwedder Bread Slicer, which was able to slice and wrap bread. Prior to this, all loaves had to be sliced by hand after purchase.