

Ice-Box Yeast Breads

By STELLA E. FULTON

THE big sweet-smelling pans of rolls, the pans of spicy kuchen or the loaves of nut-and-raisin bread that we used to spread out on our kitchen tables of a Saturday afternoon, ready for the Sunday-morning breakfast or the Sunday-night supper, were delicious and never to be forgotten. But one reason why we gave up this baking was that these breads did not submit themselves to any kind of time schedule and therefore interfered with any time budget that the housekeeper might make. If the house happened to get cold during the night, or if we mixed them too stiff, or sometimes for no reason at all that we could discover, they came up slowly and demanded attention just at the moment when the housekeeper was busiest or wanted to go out.

But lately I have learned of a dough that can be counted on to be ready for the oven, promptly to the minute. And it has another big advantage. It requires no kneading whatever. To mix a batch and bake it is easier, on the whole, than to mix and bake quick breads. And it is as delicious as though hours of time had been spent in its preparation.

ICE-BOX DOUGH. Mix two cupfuls of boiling water, one-half cupful of sugar, one tablespoonful of salt, two tablespoonfuls of shortening and cool to lukewarm. Soften two cakes of compressed yeast in one-quarter cupful of lukewarm water, add one teaspoonful of sugar and stir into the first mixture. Add two beaten eggs and stir in four cupfuls of flour and beat thoroughly, then stir in three or four more cupfuls of flour but do not knead. Cover and put in the ice box to have on hand. Shape and put into pans to double in bulk about three hours before ready to bake.

The special advantage of this dough is that it need not all be used at once. Simply take out what is required, enough for a pan of rolls and a coffee kuchen, perhaps. Then cover the balance and set away till more is wanted. Held at sufficiently low temperature the dough will keep for a week.

DRY YEAST ICE-BOX DOUGH is made by pouring two cupfuls of boiling water over three-quarters of a cupful of sugar, two tablespoonfuls of shortening and two and a half teaspoonfuls of salt. When cool add two beaten eggs, then one cake of dry yeast softened in one cupful of tepid water. Add two or three cupfuls of flour, beat well and let rise for two hours. Then add about eight cupfuls of flour, knead and put in ice box for three days before using, pushing down from the sides each day. Shape and allow about three

hours to double in bulk in a warm place before baking.

As this dough is sweet and rich it forms the basis of many kinds of rolls as well as any dried or fresh fruit coffee kuchen.

These are prepared by rolling the dough to one-half inch in thickness and placing it in a buttered pie dish or bread pan for about three hours to double in bulk. Just before putting into a hot oven (425° F.) to bake for about twenty minutes, cover with one of the following fruit mixtures:

DUTCH APPLE KUCHEN. Arrange slices of apples slightly overlapping and cover with a paste of one-half cupful of brown sugar, one-half teaspoonful of cinnamon and sufficient cream to moisten to a thick paste, about two tablespoonfuls.

PINEAPPLE KUCHEN is made the same way by substituting well-drained crushed canned pineapple for apples and white sugar instead of brown. This gives a highly glazed candied-fruit finish.

PEAR KUCHEN is a luscious variation. If dried fruit is used soak it well, and for fresh fruit use less cream for the paste, to which add half a teaspoonful of lemon rind.

PEACH OR PRUNE KUCHEN. Cover with well-soaked peaches or pitted prunes, dot with butter and sprinkle with sugar mixed with a little grated peel of an orange.

FRUIT OR NUT LOAVES may be made by adding various dried fruits, nuts or prepared bran to this sweet-bread foundation. One of the best of these is fig bread. To a pound of dough add a cupful of cooking figs cut into small pieces with scissors. When well mixed place in a greased bread pan, let rise until doubled in bulk and bake about forty-five minutes at 380° F.

CARAMEL PECAN ROLLS are fast becoming a universal favorite in all bake shops. To make them, roll the dough out to less than half an inch thick and in oblong shape about six by ten inches. Brush with melted butter, roll up loosely the short way and cut crosswise in pieces about two inches long. Stand on the cut edge, with dough well apart, in a baking pan containing a caramel mixture, made by stirring two tablespoonfuls of butter and one cupful of sugar until light brown, then adding one cupful of boiling water and cooking to a heavy sirup. Sprinkle with half pecan meats before adding the rolls, and allow at least an inch around each one for rising. Bake about thirty minutes at 400° F. and turn out of the pan to cool.