

ALTAR BREAD (PROSFORA - KURBAN)

approx. 4 cups flour (bread flour preferred)

1 teaspoon salt

1 pkg. dry yeast

Pour $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of very warm water in large bowl. Add yeast and salt. Then start adding flour and knead mixture until dough becomes dry enough that it does not stick to your hands. You will not need more than 4 cups of flour, maybe a bit less. IF you desire to use some whole wheat flour, about one cup will suffice (definitely not more than a third of the total mixture).

When you have a nice dough, cover with a cloth and let rise in a draftless place. (Try a cold oven with light bulb on.) When double in size, usually 1-2 hours, punch down dough and divide into half. Roll each half into a 10 inch circle and place into floured cake pans, or cookie tins. Do not grease pans for Altar Bread!

Let rise again, $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 hour. Stamp with religious seal and prick with toothpick around edges of seal and around edges of loaf to let steam escape. Dip seal into flour before stamping to avoid sticking. After several uses, the seal will no longer have sticking problems.

Bake for 20 - 21 minutes at 375 or approx. 25 minutes at 350 degrees. It depends on the oven. If top is not brown enough, put under broiler for a few seconds for just a touch of golden brown.

Cool on rack (very important) to keep bottoms from getting soggy. Only when completely cool, place in plastic bags. Bring to Church freezer or freeze at home.

And: If recipe is doubled, do not double yeast.

IMPORTANT: Holy Bread (Prosfora - Kurban) should be baked in an atmosphere of prayer and tranquility. Peace and calm should be unhindered by family disagreements, loud talking and gossip. TV or radio are out of character with the offering being made, and should be turned OFF. In addition to quiet time devoted to prayer, some form of spiritual reading is appropriate. Orthodox liturgical music (tape or CD) is appropriate also.

Writing a letter, or sending cards to shut-ins, or working on a Sunday School or Church project, or helping children with home work, will combine well with prayer and reading during the preparation time.