

Lace's bacon, egg and mozzarella brunch bread



READY IN: 2½ HOURS+

SERVES: 10-12

This showstopper is wonderfully versatile. You can make it super luxe with fresh mozzarella and basil leaves for a special occasion, or switch the mozzarella for your regular cheese, grated. A smear of basil pesto will work in place of fresh basil leaves. You can assemble the recipe into 12 scrolls instead of 1 big loaf – great for a picnic or taking to someone else's place to reheat when you arrive. Bake in a greased cake or roasting pan approximately 32cm x 22cm.

For the dough:

4 cups plain flour

1 tsp sugar

½ tsp salt

1 sachet of instant yeast or 1 tsp active dried yeast – see tips below

1 cup warm water, plus a splash more if needed

½ cup warm milk

Filling:

8 eggs, hard boiled

400g streaky bacon

A couple of good handfuls of basil

250g fresh mozzarella or a mix of mozzarella and bocconcini (baby mozzarella balls), or any cheese you fancy, grated

Salt and pepper

A dash of olive oil (or any neutral oil)

1 egg, lightly beaten with a dash of water for glazing the bread

MAKE THE DOUGH:

If using an instant yeast sachet, combine all the dry ingredients in a large bowl, mix in the milk and water and stir to form a dough, adding a dash more liquid if required. If using active dried yeast from a jar, place ½ cup of the warm water in a bowl, dissolve in the sugar then sprinkle the yeast on top and leave until foamy – around 7-10 minutes. In a large bowl combine the dry ingredients. Stir in the foamy yeast mixture and remaining warm milk and water to form a dough, adding a dash more liquid if required.

On a lightly floured bench, knead the dough for about 10 minutes, until smooth, elastic and springy when pressed gently, or use a mixer fitted with a dough hook if you have one. Place the dough in a clean, greased bowl; cover with plastic wrap. To speed-raise the dough, place in the microwave on low power (10%) for 1 minute, rest the dough for 10 minutes then repeat until the dough has doubled in size – allow around 35 minutes. Or place the bowl in a warm place until doubled in size, between 1 and 2½ hours.

When the dough has risen, turn it onto a lightly floured bench. Roll and shape it into a long rectangle around 85cm long and about 18cm wide. Arrange the bacon rashers down the length of the dough, place the hard boiled eggs at regular intervals and scatter with torn basil leaves and chunks of cheese. Drizzle with oil and season with salt and pepper.

Fold the dough over and roll to enclose the filling, then gently shape into a ring, tucking one end into the other and pinching carefully to securely close the ring. Transfer to a floured baking tray and rest the loaf for 15 minutes while you preheat the oven to 190°C. Brush the loaf with the egg wash and sprinkle with salt. Bake for 30-40 minutes until golden. Serve warm in thick slices with a chutney or relish of your choice.

TIPS: Instant yeast granules are so fine they activate when added directly into the flour, removing the need to activate the yeast in warm liquid, unlike the jars of active dried yeast. The sachets also stay fresh for a long time. Use whichever yeast you have, as there is no discernible difference in the end result.

The amount of liquid required will vary slightly from batch to batch due to variations in the flour, how it is stored, the humidity etc. It's easier to add extra flour to a dough that is a bit too wet than try to work a dry, crumbly dough.



Watch Sophie Gray, Destitute Gourmet making Lace's recipe in our video here!