



## The Viking Braided Crown Common Loaf Recipe

### The Viking Braided Crown (makes 2 loaves)

#### Ingredients

##### Stage 1: Combine the following:

- 720g Organic Strong White Flour
- 300g fresh activated starter
- 480g Filtered water
- \* brown rice flour for dusting

##### Stage 2: Allow to rest or 'autolyse' for 30 mins

(cover the bowl with plastic shower cap or tea-towel)

##### Stage 3: Oil & Salt

1. Add 15g of pink Himalayan salt. Mix well.
2. Remove dough & place in a fresh clean oiled bowl (1-2Tbsp of olive oil)
3. Allow to rest for 30 mins (covered with a plastic shower cap or tea-towel)

##### Stage 4: The Letter Folding Stage!

4 Rounds in Total - 30 mins apart

##### Method:

1. Dust the counter with brown rice flour
2. Place your dough on the counter & spread out as much as possible in a rectangular shape with your hands
3. On the upper top side, pull the dough up & out in a stretching motion. Fold it back on to itself & into the middle. Now do the same on the opposite long edge. Then fold the short edge into the centre & then do the same on the opposite short edge. You should end up with a smaller folded 'letter'.
4. Flip it over & do the same on the other side
4. Place back in the oiled bowl, covered with a plastic shower cap or tea towel, for 30 mins.



5. Repeat this process 3 more times.

### **Stage 5: Forming, Shaping & Proving**

1. Dust the counter with brown rice flour

2. Place your dough on the counter & using a dough cutter, cut the dough in half. You can use your digital scales to measure each dough ball. Each one should be ca. 750g. Place one ½ aside & start working on the other half.

#### **3. The Clock:**

Form it into a round shape, then pick up an outside edge & fold it into the middle of the dough, repeat this in a clockwise motion until you end up with a smooth finish underneath. This is known as 'the clock' pulling the dough up & out with your right hand at 12-o'clock at the same time turning it with your left hand to 3-o'clock and pulling the dough up & out. Repeat in the same way all the way around the clock – 12-o'clock, 3-o'clock, 6-o'clock, 9-o'clock

#### **4. Sewing: to build tension**

Flip your dough over to reveal the smooth finish. Then flatten it out a little with your hands. Pinch the dough on the top two corners like ears & pull out - crossing over each other repeat in the middle & at the bottom so that create a seam like 'stitch' down the middle.

Then take the top part and roll it half way into the middle & then roll the rest over to the bottom. This will form a neat dough ball. The whole point of these steps is to build tension in the dough so that you get a really good oven spring & rise.

#### **5. Final shaping**

Cup your hands around the dough & on a clean bit of counter top (no flour) pull the dough towards you so that you feel the underside dragging off the counter. This action tightens the outer 'skin' of the dough which will result in a crunchy crust when cooked. Lift it and place back at the starting point.

Repeat this action multiple times to get a perfectly smooth outer skin & to build further tension in the dough. Put to one side & repeat with the other half.



## **6. Proving: You have two options:**

a) Double Prove: 4+hours counter prove at ambient temperature, followed by an overnight fridge prove (this is what I do) The counter prove will cause the dough to increase in size. Be careful when the weather is warm as your dough can very quickly overprove...

OR

b) Single Prove: just an 8-hour counter prove or an overnight fridge prove  
Take your proving basket, dust it well with flour (this can be done in advance) & place your dough into the proving basket. Cover & place in the fridge overnight (6-8 hours).

\*If you don't have a proving basket: place a clean lint free tea towel into your Pyrex bowl. Dust well with brown rice flour. Place your dough ball in the bowl & cover with the lid. Place in the fridge overnight to prove.

## **Stage 7: Getting Ready To Bake & Baking**

1. Preheat your oven to 280C (very hot!) or min. 250C

2. Remove the dough from the fridge

3. If you proved in a Pyrex bowl: Take the lid off the bowl. It will form condensation once it hits your warm kitchen air & it is important to dry this off very well (otherwise the dough will stick to it)

Once dry, dust it well with flour. Then place back on top of the bowl. Now with 2 hands, invert the bowl upside down so that the dough falls into the lid. Remove the bowl part & peel off the tea towel carefully. Place to the side  
Using a pastry brush, dust off the excess flour

4. If you proved in a Proving Basket: remove from the fridge & take off the plastic shower cap. Tip the dough out onto your pre- floured counter (brown rice flour).

## **Stage 8: Making The Viking Braided Crown (You will need a rolling pin for this stage.)**

1. Using your rolling pin, press down on the outer edge at the top of your dough to flatten it & then roll out an 'ear' - roll it out as long as possible – this is what you are going to plait with! Repeat this on the other 3 sides

2. Using a dough cutter make 2 cuts the length of each ear to create 3 pieces to plait with. Now start plaiting each 'ear' stretching the dough out as you plait.

3. Bring all 4 plaits into the centre & stick together to secure in the centre



(tuck them under to make them neat)

4. Now using your bakers lame, make some decorative incisions in the 4 sections between each plait.
5. Using your dough cutter as a spatula, lift the dough & place it back into your well-floured Pyrex lid. Place the dome back on. It is now ready to go in the oven. Repeat the same process with the other dough ball.
7. Once the oven is up to temperature, then place your dough in the oven for 35-45 mins. I find a fan/convection oven best for even distribution of heat. After 35 to 40 mins, the bread has risen & is slightly golden in colour. I like a darker colour, so I remove the lids from the bowls & allow the bread to brown a bit more (this is optional). It will only take a few mins to brown to a golden colour so keep an eye on it!
8. Remove from the oven once you are happy with the colour & take out of the bowl & place on a wire cooling rack. Allow to cool for min 30 mins before slicing.