

## Cheesy Picnic Bread (Chunk o' Cheese Bread)

When I entered this recipe in the Bake-Off competition, I used the name "Cheesy Picnic Bread." Pillsbury later changed the name to "Chunk o' Cheese Bread." Today I use a medium sharp cheddar cheese instead of the processed American cheese I used in the original recipe.

- 1¾ cups water
- ½ cup cornmeal
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ cup dark molasses
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 package or 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- ½ cup warm water (105°F to 115°F)
- 4 to 5 cups bread flour
- 1 pound sharp cheddar cheese, cut into ½-inch cubes

In a medium saucepan, stir together water, cornmeal, and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring constantly, until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in the molasses and butter. Set aside to cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl, dissolve the yeast in the warm water. Let sit until creamy, about ten minutes. Add the cornmeal mixture and 2 cups of the flour; beat well. Add the remaining flour ½ cup at a time, mixing well after each addition. When the dough comes together, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. (Today, I'd put it into my heavy-duty mixer with the dough hook in place, and mix for 10 minutes, scraping the sides of the bowl often.) Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl and turn to coat with oil. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 1 hour.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and flatten. Place ⅓ of the cheese cubes on the flattened dough and fold the dough up to enclose the cubes. Do this twice more, until all of the cheese is incorporated into the dough. You may have to let the dough rest for a few minutes between folding. Divide the dough into two equal pieces and form each piece into a round loaf.

Place the rounds on lightly greased baking sheets, cover with plastic wrap, and let rise until nearly doubled, about 45 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Bake in the preheated oven for 45 to 55 minutes or until golden brown and the bottom of the loaf sounds hollow when tapped.

*Makes 2 loaves, about 20 servings*