

PIMENTO CHEESE FRENCH BRAIDED BREAD

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ packages of quick rise yeast
4 ½ cups Gold Medal self rising flour
1 ½ cups milk 2% or higher
2 Tbs. of sugar
1 ½ tsp. salt
1 large egg
8 ounce carton of pimento cheese

This is a well used traditional recipe passed down from my wonderful mother-n-love, Betty Jackson. She always sets the most gorgeous spring tables with china, mint green or pale yellow glasses, fresh flowers and ironed napkins. I cherish all the deep belly laughs around her table, the many prayers and the deep discussions with the family about everything happening in the world around us. She is a true hostess, mother and grandmother whose Easter heart places great value on time with family, especially at Easter.

This recipe makes two large beautiful braids of bread. It takes time, but the effort is worth it. I always make it in between my Easter preparations: cleaning, laundry and table setting. I simply reheat it on Easter day.

DIRECTIONS

Combine yeast and two cups of flour. Heat together the milk, sugar and salt until warm (1 minute 20 seconds in microwave). Add to the dry mixture, and gently stir. Add egg and pimento cheese. Beat at a low speed for 30 seconds; scrape sides of bowl. Beat at medium speed for 3 minutes. By hand stir in enough of the remaining flour to make a stiff dough. Turn out onto a well floured surface (I always flour my hands before starting). Knead by hand 8-10 minutes until smooth. Place in a greased bowl, cover with a bit of oil and wrap the bowl tight with saran wrap. Cover with a clean dish cloth, and let rise until doubled in size.

Punch down. Divide the dough into 6 pieces, cover and let rest again for 10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees, and grease a baking sheet with spray Pam or oil. Roll each piece into a roll about 15" long, and shape into two long braids. Cover again with a dish cloth, and let rise until doubled in size (about 30 minutes). Bake for 15-20 minutes, and brush with melted butter when fresh.
Enjoy!!