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## Herb Doc

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The ever-evolving science of “nutrition” rarely celebrates life-sustaining classics like artisan bread. Artisan bread is a satisfying, culturally significant food. It undergoes a long fermentation process resulting in a low glycemic index, easy-to-digest protein. Processed bread lacks the taste and nutrients of artisan bread and contains unhealthy and unnecessary chemicals. Health-conscious folks can avoid the downside of processed bread by making their own with simple ingredients (including gluten-free) in less than 20 minutes of preparation.

Processed bread rushes fermentation and adds chemicals to ensure its look, taste, shelf-life, and consistency. The refined, bleached

# Digestible Artisan Bread

flour used in factory bread lacks naturally-occurring fiber, minerals, and vitamins from the three layers of the grain (bran, endosperm, and germ). Traces of the toxin glyphosate, a crop pesticide and desiccant, is also found in most conventional flour. “Enriched” bread has to supplement synthetic fiber, vitamins, and minerals to mimic the nutritional quality of artisan bread.

Artisan bread begins with four ingredients: flour, yeast (starter), water, and salt. A starter (yeast) forms naturally when wild yeast and bacteria (*Lactobacillus*) feed on the sugar in a flour and water mixture. One must continue to provide the bacteria more flour and water over time as the wild yeast multiplies and excretes carbon dioxide gases, causing expanding, bubbly, spongy dough. After three days of fermenting, lactic acids form, giving sourdough its tart flavor. Lactic acids activate phytase enzymes, helping make calcium and phosphate absorbable.

Fermented starters interact with local microbes, making every loaf of homemade bread unique! As fermentation occurs, wheat gluten breaks down into strands of more

digestible forms of protein. Baking fermented flour, water, and salt produces nutrients not found in the ingredients alone. Factory-processed bread often has fructose corn syrup, dextrose, sodium, trans fats, colors, flavor-enhancing chemicals, dough conditioners, corn, and soy (starches and oils).

Many people find that artisan sourdough bread causes fewer digestive complaints. The reason is likely from the fermentation process and the lack of additives. Gluten proteins trigger an immune response in the gut, as do other foods such as dairy and meat. Processed bread contains more gluten proteins and immune-triggering chemicals. For those with celiac disease or a confirmed gluten allergy, look only for gluten-free artisan options; artisan wheat bread still contains gluten. For those who tolerate gluten, artisan bread is a superior nutritional choice.

A bread machine is a quick and easy way to make fermented chemical-free bread at home routinely. It takes fewer than 10 minutes to combine simple ingredients (with or without gluten) and place them in the machine.

PRIME TIME  
MONTHLY



A bread machine takes over from there, mixing, rising, kneading, and baking. Within a couple of hours, you have fresh bread on your table. If you prefer the hand-kneaded, hearth-style bread, a bread machine may not cut it; the machine merely offers an option to those who would otherwise avoid the more hands-on process.

Artisan bread delivers a sensory experience of incredible flavor and nutrition without the chemical load. For those of you paying extra for tiny slices of gluten-free cardboard, get ready to fall in love with your homemade creations at a fraction of the cost. Abundant Blessings! Shellie L. Rosen, Ph.D., Dipl. O.M. (NCCAOM)®, DOM, L.Ac.

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