



Christmas Carrot and Buttermilk Loaf

This loaf came about from a fridge raid, very much like so many of my flavored or filled loaves; however, I love it so much that it has become one of the loaves I have on regular rotation in my kitchen. The dough includes a portion of mincemeat, leftover from making mince pies at Christmas. Mincemeat is made from apples, dried fruits and spices. If you cannot find this in your local food stores, there are many recipes available online to make your own.

I always end up with half a jar of mincemeat leftover in my fridge after Christmas, so one of the aims of this

recipe is to show once again that you can open your fridge, peek in and grab whatever you find and add it to a dough. You may even find that you create a new family favorite this way.

PREP: Feed your starter to generate the 50 grams ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of active starter needed for the recipe. Prepare an 11-inch (28-cm)-long oval banneton with rice flour and set aside a baking pan, at least 12 inches (30 cm) long with a lid, plus parchment paper.

Makes 1 standard loaf

50 g ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) active starter

300 g ($1\frac{1}{4}$ cups) water

75 g ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) buttermilk

350 g ($2\frac{3}{4}$ cups) strong white bread flour

150 g ($1\frac{1}{4}$ cups) whole-grain spelt flour

150 g ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) store-bought or homemade mincemeat

100 g (1 cup) grated carrot

7 g (1 tsp) salt, or to taste

Rice flour, for dusting

Step 1: In the early evening, in a large mixing bowl, roughly mix together all the ingredients, except the rice flour, until you have a shaggy, rough dough; this will be a sticky, heavy mix initially. Cover the bowl with a clean shower cap or your choice of cover and leave the bowl on the counter for 1 hour.

Step 2: After an hour or so, perform the first set of pulls and folds until the dough, it will be soft and will come into a soft loose ball. Cover the bowl again and leave it on your counter.

Step 3: Over the next few hours, do three more sets of pulls and folds on the dough, with each set the dough will be easier to pull and stretch. Pull the dough into a ball each time, covering the dough after each set. Perform the final set before going to bed.

Step 4: Leave the covered bowl on the counter overnight, typically 8 to 10 hours, at 64 to 68°F (18 to 20°C).

Step 5: In the morning, the dough will have grown to double, almost triple in size, with a bumpy surface.

Sprinkle an extra layer of rice flour into the banneton. To place the dough in an oval banneton, lift and pull the dough over itself along one side of the bowl. The dough will be pillowy and bouncy and have a satisfying resistance you will be able to feel.

(continued)

Christmas Carrot and Buttermilk Loaf (Continued)

Turn the bowl around completely to the other side and pull the dough on that side again in a line to create a fat sausage of dough. Place the dough, smooth side down, in the banneton, sprinkling extra rice flour down the sides and across the top of the dough, cover it again with the same shower cap and place it in the fridge for at least 3 hours, maximum 24 hours.

Step 6: When you are ready to bake, decide whether you would like to bake in a preheated oven or from a cold start. If preheating, set the oven to 425°F (220°C) convection or 450°F (230°C) conventional.

Remove the cover from the banneton, then place the paper over the top of the banneton and the pan upside down over the top of them both. With one hand under the banneton and one on the pan, turn it all over together to turn the dough out of the banneton and into the pan. Score the dough.

If you preheated the oven, put the lid on and bake for 50 minutes. If using a cold start, place the covered pan of dough in the oven, set the temperature as above and set a timer for 55 minutes.

After the baking time for either option, remove the covered pan from the oven. Open the lid to check the loaf. Baking in a lidded pan produces a golden loaf. When you take the lid off, if you feel that your loaf is looking pale, place it back in the hot oven, in its pan, minus the lid, for 5 to 10 minutes to brown the loaf to the color of your choice.

Note:

This loaf will bake to a darker color due to the whole-grain spelt flour, the buttermilk and the sugars in the mincemeat.

Step 7: Once baked, carefully remove the loaf from the pan, saving the parchment paper for next time, and allow the baked loaf to cool on a wire rack for at least an hour before slicing. Your kitchen will smell wonderful!

Top Tip:

If you cannot find mincemeat or would prefer not to make any, use 75 grams (½ cup) of apricot jam and 75 grams (½ cup) of mixed dried fruits