

# Swiss Christmas Bread “Weck”

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Swiss Christmas Bread or “Weck” is a recipe that has been handed down in our family going on seven generations. My father always referred to it as “Weck”. I cannot find a similar reference to “Weck” on the internet? This swiss recipe has been passed down from our ancestors in Switzerland. The recipe my father made included only muscat raisins, which are difficult to find today. We have adjusted the recipe over the years to include regular raisins, and candied red and/or green cherries. Other additions could include candied citron peel, walnuts, or other nut types. This recipe can be made with a heavy wooden mixing spoon or a Kichen Aid Mixer.

Giving a friend or neighbor a loaf of this special bread is a great gift!! We deliver ours when it is still warm. Extra loaves can also be frozen and enjoyed later.



Swiss Christmas Bread “Weck”

This recipe makes 3 loaves as pictured.

## **Ingredients:**

6 1/2 Cups of flour (we use bread flour)

2 packages of Yeast (we use rapid rise yeast)  
1 3/4 Cups of milk (fat free, 1%, 2% 4%, it doesn't matter)  
1/2 Cup of real butter (not margarine)  
2/3 Cup of very warm tap water (but not so hot as to kill the yeast)  
1/2 Cup of sugar (cane sugar or beet sugar, doesn't matter)  
1/2 teaspoon of salt  
2 grated lemon rinds  
2 Cups of raisins (one cup can be substituted with something else like candied cherries)  
2 Eggs (we use extra large)  
A 1/4 teaspoon of sugar to add to the yeast.  
An additional scrambled egg to put an egg wash on the loaf just prior to baking.

### **Putting it all together:**

- 1) Grate the rind of the 2 lemons (we use the fine side of a regular four sided grater or a very fine Microplane).
- 2) In a small bowl combine the warm tap water, yeast, and a 1/4 teaspoon of sugar and wait for the yeast to proof (we use a 2 cup pyrex glass measuring cup).
- 3) In a large bowl, combine the flour, salt, sugar, grated lemon rind, and raisins (see Kitchen Tips below).
- 5) In a small sauce pan, on low heat, combine milk and butter and scald (not boil) (see kitchen Tips below).
- 6) In a small bowl, beat the 2 eggs.
- 7) In the large bowl with the flour make 3 "pockets", one for the eggs, one for the milk, and one for the yeast.
- 8) Add all the ingredients into the flour and mix into a dough with a heavy wood spoon.
- 9) You may need to add some extra flour if the dough is too sticky. Knead the dough.
- 10) When you have a nice ball of dough, set aside in a covered bowl to rise for about an hour.
- 11) Prepare 3 baking greased baking pans. We use a medium pizza pan. Other pans will work like a pie pan or round cake pan).

- 12) Preheat the oven at 375 degrees.
- 13) When the dough has risen, punch it down and form into 3 equal sized balls.
- 14) Flatten one ball at a time and put a hole in the middle like a doughnut with a small hole in the middle. Place in or on the baking pan.
- 15) Let rise for an addition hour.
- 16) For decoration you can cut with a scissors a decoration pattern in the dough with a series of very small cuts. We make a circle of cuts around the circumference.
- 17) Egg Wash – In a small bowl, scramble an egg and brush a thin coat over the entire loaf of Weck.
- 18) Bake for 20 – 25 minutes at 375.
- 19) Cool on a cooking rack
- 20) Serve when cool enough to cut, while still warm, with real butter.



Best eaten when it is still warm from being in the oven!!

### **Kitchen Tips!**

1) Coating Fruit with Flour: Sometimes the raisins are in sticky clumps in a box. When you add raisins to the flour, separate the raisins individually as you add them to the

flour. Coat them with the flour in the bowl as you add a few at a time. The same is true of candied cherries. We cut the cherries in half with a scissors as we add them the flour.

2) Adding Fruit and Nuts: We use either 2 cups of raisins, or one cup of raisins and 1/2 cup of red candied cherries, and 1/2 cup of green candied cherries. Similar ratios of other ingredients like candied citron peel or nuts can be added. The total of fruit and nuts should not exceed 2 cups.

3) Scalding: Scalding means bringing a liquid mixture to near boiling, but not boiling. If in doubt, turn off the heat when the liquid is very warm, but not boiling. In bread making, scalding the milk serves a scientific purpose. The whey protein in milk can weaken gluten and prevent the dough from rising properly. Scalding the milk deactivates the protein so this doesn't happen (per The Kitchn). Be sure to let the scalded milk cool below 100 degrees before adding to the recipe. If you can comfortably put your finger in the milk, it should be ok.

**Makes: 3 loaves**

**Prep time:** About 3 to 3 1/2 hours

– 30 minutes to make the dough

– First rise 1 hour

– Second rise 1 hour

**Cook time:** 25 minutes