

## Irish Soda Bread – Comfort du Jour

This no-knead, no-yeast bread comes together quickly and is also remarkably flexible. You can make it plain and simple, or dress it up with herbs, oat grains, spice seeds, dried fruit, honey or just about anything else that makes you happy. My favorite add-in combination—and the one I’m sharing today—is golden raisins with caraway seeds. It may sound unusual, but it is delicious, especially toasted at breakfast with a generous smear of good Irish butter.

### INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus some extra for dusting  
1 1/2 cups whole wheat pastry flour\* (see notes)  
1 Tbsp. sugar  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. baking soda (not baking powder)  
1/2 cup golden raisins (optional)  
1 tsp. caraway seeds (optional, these are the same seeds used in deli rye breads)  
1 3/4 cups thick cultured buttermilk\*, at room temperature

### \*NOTES

Whole wheat pastry flour is lighter in protein (and texture) than regular whole wheat flour, so it is perfect for a quick bread such as this one. I love Bob’s Red Mill brand, which is available online but sometimes difficult to find in stores. If you cannot find it, don’t worry—just substitute for a total of 4 cups all-purpose flour.

Buttermilk is an important ingredient for this recipe because its acidity activates the baking soda to leaven the bread. Regular dairy or plant-based milks will not work on their own, but if you must substitute, add about 1 tablespoon of lemon juice or white vinegar for each cup of other milk to achieve similar results. You only need enough buttermilk to sufficiently moisten the dry ingredients, so you may not use it all, but have it ready just in case.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F, with rack in the center of the oven.
2. Combine flours, sugar, salt, baking soda, raisins and caraway seeds in a large bowl.
3. Make a well in the dry ingredients and pour in most of the buttermilk. Use a wooden or heavy spoon to mix at first, then switch to mixing with your hands when the dough begins to feel stiff. If needed, add the remaining buttermilk, but only enough to moisten and incorporate all the flour.
4. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured countertop or board and knead *very briefly*, until dough is cohesive but still “shaggy” in appearance. Shape dough into a round ball, about eight inches across.
5. Use a sharp, serrated knife to make deep cuts in the shape of an X or cross on top of the dough.
6. Bake 25-30 minutes, until golden brown and crunchy on the edges. If you tap the bottom of the loaf, it should sound a bit hollow.
7. Transfer soda bread to a cooling rack for a few minutes. Enjoy warm or room temperature.