



Frieda Frietag's Swiss Pear Bread

Dried pears were once a staple in rural Swiss kitchens, and many versions of pear bread made their way to the new world. Pear Bread is still common in Swiss enclaves such as Green County, WI.

*In **The Heirloom Murders**, Chloe Ellefson's friend Frieda Frietag serves it to guests. The bread is hearty and moist and absolutely delicious. This recipe makes 2 loaves.*

- 1-3/4 c. diced dried pears (about 1½ lb.)
- 1-3/4 c. mixed diced fruit of your choice, such as dates, prunes, apples, and apricots
- ½ c. chopped black walnuts
- 1 T. anise seed
- 2 pkg. dry yeast
- 1 T. melted butter
- 1 t. sugar
- 1 T. honey
- 2 t. salt
- 9-10 c. flour (Frieda uses all wheat, but you could also use white flour, or a blend)

Chop dried fruit, place in a pan, cover with water, and simmer until fruit is soft, about fifteen minutes. Drain fruit, reserving the liquid. You can do this the night before, and let the fruit drain overnight.

Add water to the drained fruit water as needed to make 3 c., and bring to lukewarm (about 90 degrees) temperature. Dissolve yeast and 1 t. sugar in the liquid. Add honey, anise seed, butter, and salt.

Add about 3 c. flour and beat until smooth with an electric mixer. Add the dried fruit and walnuts. Continue adding flour gradually until the dough is of kneading consistency—soft, but dry enough to handle. Knead until dough is light and elastic, using your hands or a dough hook with a large, heavy-duty electric mixer.

Cover the dough with a damp towel and let dough rest for 15 minutes. Knead dough again for about 10 minutes. Put dough in a large, greased bowl. Cover and let rise in a warm place for about two hours.

Punch dough down with your fist several times. Cover and let rise again for about an hour. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Divide dough in half, shape into loaves, and place each into a well-greased bread pan. Bake at 350 degrees for about an hour, or until a straw inserted into loaves comes out dry. Remove from pans and cool on racks. Keep bread in refrigerator. These loaves also freeze well.

*Note from Kathleen: I tried a number of pear bread recipes, old and new, while writing **The Heirloom Murders**. Some bakers use different combinations of dried fruit, including citron, candied cherries, and pineapple. Some roll their dough and fold it over the fruit filling. Some have created quick bread recipes that don't call for yeast. I'm grateful to all the bakers who generously shared their recipes.*