

Nancy's Soda Bread

BEST BREADS 305

GRANDMA CLARK'S SODA BREAD

An authentic gift from the very Irish Clark family of County Mayo, Ireland, and Saugatuck, Michigan. This was Grandma Sarah's own creation for teatime. It's sassy, just like her. We love it for breakfast as well, toasted slices with a smear of unsalted butter. Yummy.

6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter

3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1½ teaspoons salt

1 tablespoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

¾ cup sugar

1½ cups dried currants

1¾ cups buttermilk

2 eggs, well beaten

1 tablespoon caraway seeds (optional)

1. Smear 2 tablespoons of the butter evenly in a 10-inch cast-iron skillet. Line the buttered skillet with a circle of wax paper. Melt 2 more tablespoons butter in a separate small saucepan and set aside.

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

3. Sift the dry ingredients together. Add the currants to the dry ingredients and toss well to coat.

4. Whisk together the buttermilk, eggs, and melted butter. Add to the dry ingredients, along with the caraway seeds if desired, and mix just until blended. Do not overmix.

5. Spoon the batter into the prepared skillet and smooth the top gently with a spatula. Dot the top with the remaining 2 tablespoons butter.

6. Bake on the center rack of the oven until golden brown and puffed, about 60 minutes. Cool slightly, remove from the skillet, and cool on a rack. Or serve warm from the skillet. Cut into wedges.

1 loaf, 6 portions