*NO-KNEAD BREAD:*

*Basic No-Knead Bread*

*Adapted slightly from Jim Lahey's My Bread*

*3 cups (750 mL) bread flour
1-1/4 tsp (6 mL) table salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) instant yeast
1-1/3 cups (325 mL) cool water, at 55°F to 65°F (12°C to 18°C)*

*In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, salt and yeast. Add the water and, using a wooden spoon or your hand, mix until you have a wet, sticky dough, about 30 seconds. Make sure it's really sticky to the touch; if it's not, mix in another tablespoon or two of water.*

*Cover the bowl with a plate, tea towel or plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature (about 72°F/22°C), out of direct sunlight, until the surface is dotted with bubbles and the dough is more than double in size.*

*This will take a minimum of 12 hours and (Lahey's preference) up to 18 hours. This slow rise -fermentation -is the key to flavour.*

*When the first fermentation is complete, generously dust a work surface (a wooden or plastic cutting board is fine) with flour. Use a bowl scraper or rubber spatula to scrape the dough on the board in one piece.*

*When you begin to pull the dough away from the bowl it will cling in long, thin strands (this is the developed gluten), and it will be quite loose and sticky, but do not add more flour.*

*Use lightly floured hands, a bowl scraper or spatula to lift the edges of the dough toward the centre. Nudge and tuck in the edges of the dough to make it round.*

*Place on a piece of parchment paper, seam side down. Cover with a clean towel and place in a warm, draft-free spot to rise for 1 to 2 hours. The dough is ready when it is almost doubled in size.*

*Half an hour before the end of the second rise, preheat the oven to 475°F (240°C), with a rack in the lower-third position and place a covered 4½ to 5½ quart (4¼ to 5 L) heavy pot in the centre of the rack.*

*Using pot holders, carefully remove the preheated pot from the oven and uncover it. Gather up the dough by holding the four corners of the parchment paper and place the entire thing, paper and all, into the pot.*

*Cover the pot and bake for 20 minutes. (I use a cast iron covered pot)*

*Remove the lid and continue baking until the bread is a deep chestnut colour, but not burned, about 10-15 minutes more.*

*Use a heatproof spatula or pot holders to carefully lift the bread out of the pot and place it on a rack to cool thoroughly. Don't slice or tear into it until it has cooled, which usually takes at least an hour.*

*Makes one large loaf.*

*di Muriel de Toledo*