



Prue Leith's Malt Loaf

Not a resident's recipe but direct from the Great British Bakeoff. This delicious malt loaf is something that anyone can have a go at and enter the result in the Village Show

The key to a great malt loaf is in the fruit-soaking – either in the microwave if you're short of time, or overnight at room temperature. For maximum squidgy texture, wrap the finished loaf and leave it for a few days before eating.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 strong black tea bag
- 150ml just-boiled water
- 200g flame raisins
- 100g soft, pitted prunes, finely chopped
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 150g malt extract, plus extra for glazing
- 40g black treacle
- 100g dark muscovado sugar
- 250g plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- unsalted butter, to serve (optional)

EQUIPMENT

You will need a 900g loaf tin, oiled, then lined (base and sides) with baking paper.

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 170°C/150°C fan/325°F/Gas 3.
2. Make the malt loaf. Place the tea bag in a jug and add

the just-boiled water. Leave to brew for 5 minutes, then discard the bag.

3. Tip the raisins and prunes into a microwave-safe bowl, then pour the tea over. Cover with cling film and pierce a few holes in the top. Microwave on full power for 4 minutes. Carefully remove the bowl from the microwave and remove the cling film. (Alternatively, soak the fruit overnight in a covered bowl.) Stir in the bicarbonate of soda, then leave the fruit to stand for 10 minutes.

4. Pour the malt extract into a small pan with the treacle and sugar and cook, stirring continuously, over a low heat for 2–3 minutes, until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat and cool for 5 minutes.

5. Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl and make a well in the centre. Add the warm malt mixture and the tea-soaked fruit and any soaking liquid. Fold everything gently together, then add the beaten eggs and mix well. Pour the mixture into the lined tin and bake it for 1–1¼ hours, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove the loaf from the oven, brush the top with malt extract, then leave the malt loaf to cool completely in the tin.

6. If you can bear to wait before tucking in, once the malt loaf is cool, wrap it tightly in baking paper and leave it to really develop its flavour and texture for 1–2 days. Then, turn it out and set it the right way upon a serving plate. Serve in slices (spread with butter, if you wish).