

Italian Scali Bread (using wine yeast)

I made a sponge using 6 ounces of all purpose flour, 6 ounces of warm water, and 2 packets of wine yeast. Mixed it in a 4-cup glass measuring cup, covered with plastic wrap and set it aside for 23 hours (you want to let it process for 6-24 hours before using).

When it came time to make the bread (I made Italian Scali bread), I first placed 11 ounces of all-purpose flour, and 2 teaspoons salt into my Kitchen Aid bowl and gave it a good stir. Then, into the sponge, I added 3 tablespoons sugar, 1 tablespoon EVOO, and 5 ounces of room temperature water and stirred until well-combined. Using the dough hook on low speed, slowly add the sponge to the flour mixture and mix until the dough starts to form and no dry flour remains (scraping down the sides as needed), about 2 minutes. Increase speed to medium low and knead about 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic and clears the sides of the bowl.

Transfer dough to lightly floured counter and knead by hand to form a smooth, round ball, about 30 seconds. Place seam side down in a lightly greased bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap and let rise until doubled in size, about 2 hours.

Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil or parchment, and spray with vegetable oil spray.

Punch down dough to deflate, transfer dough to lightly floured counter, and divide into thirds (about 9 ½ ounces each). Working with 1 piece at a time, roll with hands into 10-inch ropes. Arrange ropes side by side and pinch one end together. Braid ropes into a 10-inch loaf and pinch remaining ends together.

Transfer loaf to prepared baking sheet, and reshape as needed, tucking ends under to make a taut loaf. Lightly spray top with vegetable oil spray, and loosely cover with plastic wrap. Let rise until loaf increased in size by half, and dough springs back minimally when poked gently with a knuckle (about 45 minutes).

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine 1 egg, 1 tablespoon water, and a pinch of salt, and mix well. Gently brush loaf with egg mixture and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Bake until golden brown and loaf registers 205-210 degrees, 35-40 minutes. Transfer loaf to wire rack and let cool at least 2 hours before slicing.

Sponge after 23 Hours



Side view of sponge



Dough before 1st Rise



Dough after 1st Rise



Ropes ready to braid



Ready for the oven



Baked Italian Scali

