

# Perfect french baguettes



**Yield: 3 baguettes**

**Prep Time: 2 hours**

**Cook Time: 20 minutes**

**Total Time: 2 hours, 20 minutes**

**Ingredients:**

17 ounces | 3 3/4 cups bread flour

0.34 ounces | 2 teaspoons kosher salt

0.13 ounces | 2 1/2 teaspoons (about 1 and 1/4 packets)  
instant dry yeast

10 ounces | 1 1/4 cups warm water (98-105 degrees F)

**Directions:**

preparing the dough

in the bowl of a stand mixer with the dough hook attached, combine the bread flour and kosher salt.

pour the yeast into the warm water and stir it around gently with your finger. allow to stand for 3 minutes.

pour the yeast and water into the stand mixer bowl, and scrape out as much of the yeast that may cling to the sides of the bowl as you can with your finger.

turn the mixer on medium-low (speed 4), and allow to mix for 2 minutes.

after 2 minutes, scrape down the sides of the mixer with a

plastic bowl scraper, and turn the mixer on medium (speed 6). allow to mix for 4 minutes.

the mixer will probably make a lot of noise and could be moving around and jumping a bit, so keep your eye on it!

after the 4 minutes is up, turn the mixer off. grab a small piece of dough, about the size of a gumball and roll it around in a ball in your hands. flatten the ball and gently pull on the edges with your fingers. you're checking the elasticity of the dough. if the dough immediately tears in half or rips, place the small ball back in with the rest of the dough and mix on speed 6 for 1-2 more minutes.

do the gumball test again: what we're looking for is a smooth, elastic pliable dough. hold the dough up to the light as you stretch it—you want to be able to see through it, and there should be faint lines in the dough. these are the gluten strands that will hold your dough together. if you see them and the dough isn't ripping or tearing, it's ready.

turn the large dough mass onto a floured surface (i like working on a wood cutting board) and cover with plastic wrap. you want to keep as much air out as possible. i like to also throw a kitchen towel on top of the dough mass to help it stay warm so it will grow.

leave this dough mass undisturbed until it doubles in size. for me it's about 30 minutes, but here's how to test if it's ready to work with.

place a small amount of flour on your pointer finger knuckle. lift the plastic wrap off the dough ball and lightly press the floured knuckle into the dough and remove your knuckle—if the dough holds the knuckle shape and springs back very slowly, it's ready to work.

punching & scaling the dough

punch the dough down! no, we're not going to actually punch it, but rather fold and press it into the work surface to remove air bubbles. knead it for about 1 minute, folding the dough into itself and onto the work surface, pressing out air

bubbles along the edges of the dough.

using your kitchen scale and a sharp knife (i like a bench knife!), measure the dough into three equal portions. they should weigh around 9 ounces each.

place the heels of your hands together to make a 'V' with your hands. place a ball of dough in the bottom of the 'V' and gently push the ball of dough forwards and into the work surface. this is called rounding. bring the dough ball back to where you started and push the ball again with the heels of your hands in the 'V' shape a few more times, about 10-15 until your ball is round, smooth and elastic.

repeat with remaining dough balls.

once all the balls are formed, cover loosely with the plastic wrap and allow to rest for 15 minutes.

shaping the baguettes

time to shape our baguettes! take your dough ball and flatten it into a round circle, kind of like a pizza dough. press out the air bubbles along the edges of the dough with the heels of your hands.

grab the bottom of the flat circle and bring it into the center of the circle, squeezing to seal it up. continue squeezing and rolling up the dough until you've formed a little dough log.

roll the dough log over and, starting at one end, pull the edges of the dough into the log and pinch to seal the seam. do this the entire length of the dough log, from one end to another until there is one continuous seam.

roll the dough log over again, and using your hands starting in the center of the log, slowly and gently roll the dough outwards, moving your hands away from one another until you reach the end. make sure the seam stays on the bottom! the dough should be uniform in thickness throughout, and you'll want it to be about 14-16" long.

once the log is rolled out, place it seam side down onto the baguette pan. repeat with remaining dough balls until all baguettes are formed.

proofing

time to rise! since i don't have a fancy proof box, i let my baguettes rise in the microwave.

take a cup of very hot water and place it in the back of the microwave. place the baguette pan in the microwave and shut the door.

allow the baguettes to proof for anywhere from 35-50 minutes, until they've puffed up and doubled in size.

scoring, spraying and baking

preheat the oven to 425 degrees F, with a rack in the center of the oven.

remove the baguettes from the microwave. time to score them!

i like to use a razorblade for this, but you can use a very sharp paring knife if you'd like to do that.

score 5 deep slices diagonally down the length of the baguettes—don't be afraid to go deep! it's best if you can get a cut that's between 1/4"-1/2" deep.

since i don't have a fancy oven that is steam-injected, i spray each baguette liberally with water using a cheap spray bottle. don't be afraid to really douse them with water!

place the baguettes in the oven and bake at 425 degrees F for about 20 minutes, or until they're golden brown and delicious. they make be ready sooner than that, but we're looking for a lovely golden brown color, and an internal temperature of at least 180 degrees F.

when the baguettes are done, remove from the oven and allow to rest for about 5-10 minutes before enjoying!

enjoying and storing

the baguettes are best eaten fresh, about 4-6 hours after baking, but they will last stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

make sure to not put them in a plastic bag or plastic container until they are fully cooled, since the humidity from the hot baguette being trapped in a plastic container will ruin them!

they're best stored in a paper grocery bag, actually. it's tres french!