

Tom's Communion Bread Research and Recipe

After researching several communion bread recipes, looking at cooking methodology of the ancient Israelites and looking at Scriptures that referenced bread baking, my recipe for communion bread follows.

Ancient Israelites would have baked this in a clay beehive shaped oven (called a tannur) with the bread discs thrown on inner side walls of the clay oven. A fire would burn in a recessed well in the bottom of the oven and sometimes around the outer edges of the oven.

Rather than a clay oven, we're using a modern oven. We're using a recipe with Biblical roots all reflecting back to the Israelites' exodus from Egypt:

Exodus 29:2 -- *And from the finest wheat flour make round loaves without yeast, thick loaves without yeast and with olive oil mixed in, and thin loaves without yeast and brushed with olive oil.*

Leviticus 2:4 -- *If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of the finest flour: either thick loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in or thin loaves made without yeast and brushed with olive oil.*

1 Kings 17:10-14 -- *So he (Elijah) went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?"*

As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

"As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.'"

Looking at such Scriptures, we learn the recipe is simple ... flour, oil, sometimes salt and sometimes even honey. Some references talk about yeast, but for communion purposes we use bread commemorating the Passover when the Israelites were driven out of Egypt, and that bread was basic and baked in a hurry without time to rise (unleavened.)

This example is given to us in Matthew 26 with the account of the Lord's Supper or the Last Supper. Jesus and those close to Him are commemorating the Passover with the

Feast of Unleavened Bread ... unleavened because of the circumstances in Exodus 12:39: *The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare food for themselves.*

All of those things come together for me, generating the following recipe:

Communion Bread (*I normally double this*)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Stir together with a knife ...

1 heaping cup sifted flour (make sure the flour is sifted)

1/4 cup olive oil

... stir together until the combination looks crumbly and clumpy.

Add ¼ teaspoon salt to the same cup used to measure the oil (don't rinse it.) Add ¼ cup water, and mix the salt and water together to dissolve the salt. Then add the salt/water mixture to the flour/oil mixture. Stir with a knife.

The mixture will look like a slurry at first, but as you continue stirring, the flour will absorb the liquid and turn into a dough. Stir until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl and holds its shape.

Take a piece of wax paper, fold it in half. Pinch off a bit of dough about the size of a pecan and pat out the dough inside the wax paper until it's a flat, thin disc with a shape similar to a small rustic tortilla.

Peel the dough off the wax paper and place on the parchment paper on the baking sheet. Continue until all dough has been patted out. You should get about 10 discs.

At this point, you could score the discs with a pizza cutter for individual pieces, or leave the discs whole for people to break off their portion.

Bake in a 425-degree oven for 10-12 minutes or until lightly brown around the edges of the discs.

Once cool, seal in a zippered plastic bag and store in the freezer.

Blessings!