Brown 'n Serve

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Recommended Citation
Miller, Marjorie (1950) "Brown 'n Serve," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 30 : No. 6 , Article 7.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol30/iss6/7
Every day is hot roll day with the new rolls that you just . . .

Brown 'n Serve

by Marjorie Miller

Experimental Cookery Junior

BEHIND the glamour of a secret name and skyrocketing sales is the less well-known story of men and women who pooled years of baking experience to make sure that Brown 'n Serve rolls, discovered by accident, were safe and dependable as well as revolutionary.

When volunteer fireman, Joe Gregor, of Avon Park, Florida, heard screaming fire sirens, he was forced to pull partly baked rolls from his bakery oven. Returning from the fire, Gregor popped the cold, white, rigid rolls back into his oven. Seven minutes later, he pulled out golden brown rolls that filled the room with the aroma of fresh bread.

Capitalizing on this discovery meant establishing a flourishing business of “Pop in the Oven” rolls.

A General Mills salesman discovered the preprocessed rolls in Gregor’s small bake shop. This led to “Project 49,” secret designation of the Brown ’n Serve development. A major part of the project was assigned to the Bakery Sales Service Department of General Mills. Betty Crocker kitchens ran hundreds of tests on the new rolls. Results proved that they needed a slightly warmer, firmer dough than ordinary rolls, and a lower baking temperature.

Rolls for You

The objectives of preparing Brown ’n Serve rolls for the grocer’s shelves is to give you, the consumer, rolls with full volume and rigidity without crust color. Low baking temperatures “set” the interior dough before the exterior browns. Due to lower temperatures, Brown ’n Serve rolls lose less moisture during baking than the conventional rolls. Dough cannot contain large amounts of water, but needs to be made firmer and stiffer than ordinary dough.
One of the main problems of perfection was how to give you rolls that would not swell excessively and lose their attractive shape while baking. Under normal baking temperatures, yeast cells are killed rapidly, and rising stops soon after baking begins. In the new process the dough continued to rise all the while it was in the baker's oven.

**Scientific Experiments**

Experiments showed that this “oven spring” could be cut down by mixing dough less vigorously at warmer than usual temperatures. Mild rising leaves the protein less able to stretch and rise. The warm temperature stimulates the yeast to work itself to death before reaching the oven.

“Proofing,” which is a baker's term for letting formed breadstuffs rise in temperature controlled cabinets, proved to be a key weapon against “oven spring.” By “proofing” Brown 'n Serve rolls approximately three-fourths as high as regular rolls, the baker gives you rolls rising the normal amount during baking.

Physicists from General Mills Research Laboratories were called in to find proper baking temperature for the pre-processed rolls. After a series of experiments, 170 degrees Fahrenheit was set as the required internal temperature for firm rolls. You find the best baking temperatures range from 275 to 300 degrees. F. Temperatures below 275 degrees increase baking time and above 300 degrees produce unwanted crust color.

**Questions and Answers**

Answering your questions, “Are Brown 'n Serve rolls safe? Will they keep well enough to give convenience to the merchant and homemaker?” was a special part of “Project 49.”

Dr. John S. Andrews, head of the Foods Research Department of General Mills Research Laboratories answered the first question by consulting leading bacteriologists and dairy specialists. He found that in bakery products, temperatures comparable to 150 degrees for 30 minutes are considered sufficient to destroy all common disease producing organisms. The Brown 'n Serve process gives you conditions equivalent to 8 or 9 minutes more than the 30 minute safety maximum.

Storage tests were set up to check keeping qualities. Tests showed that you may keep rolls on the pantry shelf for 2 days, in the refrigerator for 2 weeks and in the freezer indefinitely. Although these rolls stale as do all cereal products, staling has one good feature. It is reversible. When you pop Brown 'n Serve rolls into an oven, you automatically do away with any staleness they may have developed. By heating them enough to brown the crust, you give them full flavor of just-baked rolls.

You'll find Brown 'n Serve products better than fresh, hot rolls. They have special flavor all of their own due to the slow, low temperature baking process. Since rapidly escaping moisture carries with it flavoring substances, low-temperature rolls have an extra advantage in flavor retention. With proved and improved Brown 'n Serve breads on the market, you can serve fresh, hot rolls every day of the week.

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