

This version of the national bread of Ireland comes from the Royal Hibernian Hotel in Dublin, where they serve it warm and thinly sliced.

### Royal Hibernian Brown Bread

All recipes this week are adapted from "Bernard Clayton's New Complete Book of Breads: Revised and Expanded" by Bernard Clayton, available from Amazon.com in hardcover at:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0671602225/worldwiderecipes>

and in paperback at:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/068481174X/worldwiderecipes>

2 1/2 cups (625 ml) whole-wheat flour (stone-ground preferred)  
1 cup (250 ml) all-purpose flour, approximately  
2 Tbs (350 ml) sugar  
1 1/2 tsp (7 ml) baking soda  
1 tsp (5 ml) salt  
4 Tbs (60 ml) butter at room temperature  
1 egg  
1 1/4 cups (310 ml) buttermilk

Mix together all the dry ingredients (reserving a little of the all-purpose flour) in a large mixing bowl. Work the butter into the flour mixture with your fingers until the mixture resembles tiny bread crumbs. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture and add the egg and buttermilk. Stir the liquid into the dry ingredients gradually, using a wooden spoon to start and then by hand or with an electric mixer until a stiff dough forms. Turn the batter out onto a floured surface and work with your hands – do not knead – to thoroughly blend the ingredients. The butter in the dough should prevent it from sticking too much, but add a little flour if the dough is too sticky to handle. Shape into a round ball, place on an ungreased baking sheet, and cut a 1/2-inch (1 cm) deep cross in the top using a sharp knife or razor blade. Bake in a preheated 400F (200C) oven until the loaf has browned and opened dramatically, about 45 minutes. Cool on a wire rack before slicing. Makes 1 round loaf.

Bon appetit from the Chef at World Wide Recipes

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