

## 5 Easy Ways to

## Bake Quick Breads Successfully Every Time

Quick breads use baking powder and/or baking soda rather than yeast as a leavening (rising) agent. They are popular because they cook quickly (no waiting for the dough to rise) and taste great. The key to deliciously tender loaves and muffins is to keep the gluten in the flour from “developing” too much. Follow these five tips when you make breads from batters - and you’ll be able to wow friends and family every time!

### 1. Preheat oven and “grease” pan **THOROUGHLY.**

First, arrange racks so pans can sit in the middle of the oven; then, preheat oven for 10 to 15 minutes. These steps help to provide the uniform high heat that allows breads and muffins to rise quickly and cook thoroughly. Quick bread batter is sticky, so cover pan surfaces with cooking spray, oil, or shortening. Paper muffin liners and non-stick pans also work great.

### 2. Mix dry and wet ingredients **SEPARATELY.**

Measure dry ingredients - flours, cereals, sugar, salt, spices, and leavenings (baking soda, baking powder, and/or cream of tartar) - carefully into a large bowl. Stir or whisk together until well mixed. Measure wet ingredients (milk, eggs, oil, melted butter, fresh fruit, dried fruit, applesauce, etc.) into a medium bowl and mix according to recipe instructions.

### 3. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients **GENTLY.**

**This is the most critical step.** The more you mix the wet and dry ingredients together, the more you develop the flour’s gluten. Over-mixing leads to tough, coarse bread that does not rise correctly. **Do not beat the batter.** Gently stir the batter just enough to moisten the dry ingredients. There may be a few lumps remaining, which is just fine.

### 4. Fill baking pans **PROPERLY.**

Fill bread pans and muffin tins about 2/3 full. If you plan to freeze your muffins, use two paper liners per space. Fill any empty (unlined) muffin cups half way with water. Muffins tend to burn faster in a pan with empty cups. Get bread or muffins pans into the oven as soon as possible. The longer that the batter sits around, the more the gluten develops.

### 5. Bake quick breads **CAREFULLY.**

To allow for air circulation, leave at least 1 inch of space between pans and oven sides. Check for doneness 10-15 minutes before end of the recommended baking time. The bread is done if a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. A crack in the loaf is entirely normal. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes; then turn out onto a wire rack.