



To make the ears of the wheat:

Take the last dough portion and put it on a floured working surface. Cut a small piece off and replace in the bowl. This will be the mouse.

Divide the rest of the dough into 5 equal portions. Divide each portion into 20 equal parts by weight.

Roll each piece with your hand on the floured surface into a fat, oval-shaped roll.

Pinch the end of each roll to make a point, leaving the other end rounded.

Using a small pair of pointy kitchen scissors make shallow, angled snips down the centre of each ear. Work from the rounded end to the pointed end. Position the next line of cuts between the previous cuts.

Arrange the ears close together but not touching along the edges of the crescent edge. Work your way from the top to the bottom arranging the next row of ears in the gaps of the previous ears. Cover at least 5 centimetres of the stalks.

Leave one or two ears to droop slightly to give a realistic impression.

To make the mouse:

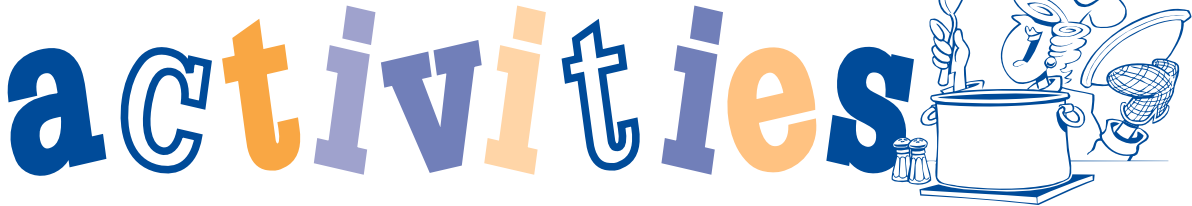
Shape the last piece of dough into an egg-shaped mouse with a pointed nose and a long, thin tail.

Make ears with scissor snips and eyes with holes. Brush the underside with water and place the mouse on the stalks as though it is creeping up the sheaf.

To bake:

Heat the oven to 220°C (425°F). Brush the wheat sheaf with the egg glaze. Using the tip of a pointed knife prick the sheaf as many places as possible following the pattern. Bake for 12 minutes. Brush with more glaze. Lower the temperature to 160°C (325°F). Bake for another 20 minutes longer or until the loaf is golden brown and very firm. Remove from the tray to a cooling rack.

The sheaf can be eaten but if you want to use it for decoration bake it for a further six hours at 120°C (250°F).



History of Wheat, Flour & Bread Production



Plan and organise a feast for guests. Design and send medieval invitations, such as scrolls. Research the setting, choices of food and methods of service (using fingers maybe!) that were used. Try the following recipes and look for more in your library. You will discover many recipes include grain. Find out why grain was important during the medieval period.

Pottage

The poorer people lived on this simple recipe most of the time. They added whatever else they had such as chopped herbs, food scraps and any other flavourings.

2 handfuls Whole wheat or Barley grains

Soak the wheat or barley overnight in water. The next day simmer gently in a saucepan until soft. Add other bits and pieces.

Rastons

Surprise your friends with a loaf in disguise. The loaf should look untouched so that the filling is unexpected.

1 White, round loaf	2 tablespoons Butter
1 tablespoon Poppy seeds	1 tablespoon Cinnamon or Nutmeg
Raisins	

With a breadknife, horizontally half the loaf with a zigzag cut. Take the top crust off and put aside. Scoop out the inside of the bottom half and crumble into a bowl. Melt the butter over a low heat in a large pan. Toss the breadcrumbs with the melted butter. Add all other ingredients to the mixture. Fill the hollowed bottom half with this mixture and replace the top crust. Reheat in a moderate (180°C, 350°F) oven for a few minutes before serving.

Wastels

Wastels were good quality loaves served to the gentry at a late medieval feast.

3 Wholemeal rolls	50 grams Butter
100 grams Mushrooms, chopped roughly	50 grams Raisins
Seasonings (salt, pepper, ground cinnamon)	1 large or 2 small Eggs
100 grams Spinach, cooked, drained and chopped roughly	

Halve the rolls and scoop out the bread as for Rastons. Put halved rolls in a moderate oven for about 10 minutes or until lightly brown and crisp. In a saucepan, melt the butter and add the mushrooms. Saute for a couple of minutes. Add the spinach and raisins. Continue to cook gently for several minutes and then add beaten egg. Cook until egg sets. Season to taste. Fill the halved rolls with the mixture and serve. Serves 6 as a starter or 3 as a main course.



Bread around the world

Can you find out where the following different breads come from

Bloomer	Pita	Hovis Rumpy/Porcupine
Cottage	Baps	Coburg
Brown Billy Loaf	Chapatis	Baguettes
Parathas	Rewena Paraoa	Rye
Greek	Ciabatta	Wheatmeal
Bagels	Granary	Procea
Stoneground	Soda	Pooris
Cob	Seedbloomer	Barrel Farmhouse
Sourdough	Keema Naan	Beer
Pugliese	Naan	Focaccia
Croissants	Wholemeal	

Find or draw a picture of each bread and pin it where it originated on a world map.



Throughout history bread has been a symbol of hope, fertility and superstition. Research a tradition or custom that involves bread. Find out what kind of equipment was used to shape, bake and present bread, How is it done today? Is it the same? - find out why or why not. Do people follow traditions or customs today? See if you can find out people's views and feelings on traditions or customs associated with bread.



Match up the different breads with their countries

Tacos	India
Chapattis	Egypt
Rewēna Paraoa	Mexico
Flat breads	New Zealand
Bagel	France
Croissant	Israel



Write down all the idioms you can think of which mention something to do with flour or bread. For example "You can't have your cake and eat it too", "It's as easy as pie", "The bread and butter", "Half baked", "Show me your dough". Find out what the idioms mean and if they have changed their meaning over time.



Make a Harvest Wheat Sheaf - it's easy!

In Victorian times the safely gathered harvest was celebrated by a large supper put on by the farmer or squire. The feast would include roast pork, rabbit pies, harvest wheat sheafs, punch and lemonade.

Here's how you make a Harvest Wheat Sheaf...

It is a good idea to have at least two people making the wheat sheaf. Set aside half a day for making the sheaf if eating it or a whole day if keeping it for decoration.

To make the bread you need:

6 cups Plain flour	2 1/2 teaspoons Salt
1 1/4 teaspoons Sugar	1 1/2 teaspoons Active dry yeast
2 1/2 cups Water, lukewarm	Egg glaze: 1 large egg beaten with 1 teaspoon Salt

Mix together the flour, salt, and 1 teaspoon sugar in a large bowl. Make a well in the centre.

In another bowl mix yeast, 1/2 teaspoon sugar with 1/2 cup of the lukewarm water and let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes.

Pour yeast mixture into the well.

Add the remaining water and mix well. Mix dough using a wooden spoon, in a mixer or in a bread machine until well-developed. Slowly add more water or flour if necessary.

Turn dough out onto floured surface and knead for 10 minutes, until very elastic.

Return dough to a slightly oiled bowl. Turn dough over so the top is oiled. The oil on the top surface will stop the dough becoming dry and crusty. Cover with a damp tea-towel and leave to rise at room temperature, until doubled in size, about 2 hours.

Punch down the dough. Turn out onto a floured working surface and knead for 2 minutes.

Cover with upturned bowl and rest for 10 minutes.

Cut the dough in half. Leave one portion out for the wheat sheaf base and cover the other portion with plastic wrap and store in fridge.

Note: *At this point It is important to work quickly with all pieces of dough kept cool. Keep dough being used under a damp, cool tea-towel, and cover the rest with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator.*

To make the wheat sheaf base:

Working on a lightly floured surface, cut off 180 grams of dough. Roll out and shape into a 15 x 24 centimetre rectangle about one centimetre thick. Place on a metal greased tray. Make a crescent shape with the remaining dough. Overlap slightly the crescent on the rectangle. Prick the dough all over with a fork and brush with icy water.

To make the wheat stalks:

Cut the dough from the covered bowl in half, about 300 grams. Divide one portion into thirty 10 gram pieces. Roll each piece on a floured surface with your hands into a thin rope about 25 centimetres long (when picked up the ropes will stretch). Twist or plait 3 ropes together to make the sheaf band. Set this aside. Lay the other stalks side-by-side covering the rectangle and approximately 8 centimetres of the crescent. Place the band across the centre of the sheaf. Do not press it down but tuck the ends under the sheaf on each side.

