

# Irish Raisin Soda Bread

*Irish bread can be made very quickly.  
Often the soda flour comes already mixed with  
the raising agent, it will be called  
self raising soda bread flour, use this same recipe  
but do not add the bicarbonate of soda.*



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You will need a big bowl or saucepan to mix the dough and a baking tray. You can use a strong spoon or your hands to mix the dough.

## Ingredients

450g / 1lb	unbleached plain flour
1 teaspoon	Baking soda (Bicarbonate of soda)
½ teaspoon	Salt
450ml/ 16fl oz	Buttermilk (milk; diluted natural yoghurt is good too)
125g / 4oz	Raisins soaked in cold tea (optional)
1 beaten egg	<i>optional but makes a richer and softer bread.</i>

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## Method

Preheat the oven to 210°C

- Sieve the flour, baking soda and salt into a large bowl and mix.
- Squeeze the excess liquid from the soaked raisins and add them to the bowl.
- Make a well in the centre of the flour and pour in about 2/3rds of the buttermilk.
- Quickly and with a light touch bring the flour in from the edges and mix with the milk, until all the ingredients come together into dough.
- Use your hands or a big spoon **BUT DON'T BE TEMPTED TO MIX AND MIX AND MIX**
- It should begin to come together quickly with some floury bit still present.
- Now add the rest of the milk and blend ...NOW it should be sticky and have formed a soft dough.
- If it is too dry add a little more buttermilk or too wet add a little flour 1/2 handful
- Once it has come together, just place it on a floured wooden board
- With clean and floured hands **do not knead** just shape, the dough into a rounded shape.
- Toss flour or oats onto the baking tray and set the dough on top. Cut a large x on the top.
- **Do all of this as quickly as you can** and then put the bread into the oven immediately.
- Cook for about 10 minutes at 210°C., and then turn the oven down to 200
- The initial high temperature ensures a good crust.
- After another 15 – 20 minutes take the bread out . To check how well it is cooked. Push a skewer into the dough count for 3 sec and remove. If there is sticky dough attached put back for 5 more minutes . Experienced bakers can tap the base to hear the cooked drum sound.
- Remove when cooked and place on a cooling rack. Wrapping the bread a clean tea towel that is slightly damp makes the crust so much easier to cut.

**Serve with real butter and jam. Wallops of cheese and ham or smoked salmon..yummy!**

