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### Irish Soda Bread

An Irish soda bread recipe can be found in practically every household in Ireland! This bread, with its thick hard crust, is quintessential Ireland, and absolutely delicious with butter, homemade jam and a cup of tea. In Ireland it is also known as 'cake', 'cake bread' or 'soda cake'.

Below is my mam's Irish soda bread recipe. She prefers the white variety, but brown (wholemeal) soda bread is arguably more popular across the country. Like all cake breads, this one needs to be eaten on the day it is baked. If it isn't devoured that quickly (rare in our house!), it is delicious toasted or fried the following day. You can either buy or [make your own Buttermilk](#).

### Ingredients

for one large loaf: \*Most Irish soda bread recipes refer to 'bread soda'. It's also known as bicarbonate of soda.

- 1lb 8oz (650g) plain white flour
- 1 level tsp salt
- 1 level tsp bread soda\*
- 12fl oz (350ml) buttermilk

### Method

Pre-heat your oven to 230C/450F/gas8. Sieve the flour, salt and bread soda into a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the centre. Pour most of the buttermilk into the well. Stir with your hand or a wooden spoon, mixing the flour into the well in a circular motion until it becomes a soft, spongy dough. It should not be too wet or sticky. If it is too dry, add a little more buttermilk. Turn it out onto a floured board and knead very lightly - just sufficient for you to shape it into a flat round about 2 inches (5cm) deep. Using a knife, mark the dough with a cross that reaches to the sides. There are two schools of thought about the cross.... some say it is to let the fairies escape, others that it brings the blessings of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Take your pick. Place the round onto a baking tray and bake for 20 minutes before reducing the heat to 200C/400F/Gas6 for a further 20-30 minutes. You'll know when the bread is cooked when tapping its underside produces a hollow sound. Leave the bread to cool on the windowsill or on a wire rack. Mam's tip: Wrap the cake in a tea towel if you prefer a softer crust. Prefer brown bread? You can adapt this Irish soda bread recipe by substituting the white flour with a mixture of 1lb (450g) of wholemeal flour and 8oz (225g) of white. Simply mix them together and continue with the rest of the above instructions for perfect brown Irish soda bread.