World War I – Barley Bread

With flour shortages by 1915, barley and oats were used to extend the amount of bread that bakers could produce. Barley Bread was available in most bakers' shops, as was oatmeal bread. Barley flour has a low gluten content, so it needs to be mixed with strong bread flour to give a suitable rise during baking. It is also worth noting that most bread recipes from this time had a lot of salt added.

12oz (330g) Barley Flour
8oz (220g) Wholemeal flour
1 teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of castor sugar
15g fresh yeast (7g dried yeast)
3 gills (250ml) tepid water

Warm a large basin and a small basin
Measure the flour and salt into the large basin.
Cream the yeast with the sugar and a little water.
Mix the yeast liquid and water into the flour and mix well.
Cover for 45 minutes to rise, the dough should double in size.
Kneed well and divide into pre-greased baking tins.
Prove for an hour then bake in a hot oven until done.

This bake should take about 25-30 minutes at 200°C.



For home baking, this bread may be enhanced with herbs, dried fruit or nuts. Whatever is in season would have been used for improving bread. When stale, the remaining bread could be used for bread and butter pudding or bread and jam pudding.

Historical Bread Recipe