

# JANUARY

## Better Baking Academy Parker House Rolls

For this year's Better Baking Academy, we're giving bakers a taste of some of the best recipes across the US. This month, we start our journey in the Northeast. We can all take a note from New Englanders—who are no strangers to cold winter weather—and seek solace in the blissful, buttery Parker House roll. Originally formulated by the historic Parker House Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts, these rolls have been a staple since the late 1800s, and for good reason! Pillowy-soft in the center and with a delightfully crisp outer crust, Parker House rolls are a yeast bread that lets simple flavors shine. And to give our rolls a flavorful twist, each roll is given not one, not two, but three brushes of Garlic Butter because, really, Parker House rolls are all about the butter. Whether you're after a sidekick for your favorite soups and stews or looking for a simple afternoon snack or slider bun, these rolls are just the ticket. In this lesson, we'll show you how to hand-mix your dough, cut and shape your rolls, and bake them to a beautiful golden brown.



# INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

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Great recipes require great ingredients. Here's how each of our recipe's simple ingredients contributes to making the perfect batch of our Parker House Rolls.

**WATER:** Moisture—in the form of warm water—is needed to activate the yeast and hydrate the dough so the gluten can develop. This hydration not only helps build elasticity but also, when cooking, the water is converted to steam, which helps leaven the dough and prevents the crust from forming too quickly and burning.

**GRANULATED SUGAR:** Sugar, also referred to as glucose, acts as food for yeast, which converts it to carbon dioxide and alcohol in the fermentation process. This ultimately helps to tenderize the dough, creating soft, pliable rolls. The sugar in this dough also adds a tinge of sweetness to balance the salt, contributes to the rolls' golden color, improves their crumb texture, and helps retain moisture both while the rolls bake and once stored.

**ACTIVE DRY YEAST:** Yeast is essential to all bread doughs. It needs food (sugar and carbohydrates), warmth (liquid temperature and room temperature), and moisture for proper fermentation. Yeast is killed at 139°F (59°C), so keep your thermometer on hand! Yeast acts as the main leavening agent in these rolls, so it's important that it's not killed when combined with the warm water in this recipe.

**WHOLE MILK:** We use milk to add both fat and flavor to our dough, but we cut it with water to keep the dough from getting too dark during baking. As the natural sugars found in milk heat at high temperatures, they undergo the Maillard reaction, which involves browning in its end stages, thus contributing to the gorgeous golden color of these rolls. The milk in this recipe is also warmed to keep the dough warm, setting it up for a successful first rise.

**UNSALTED BUTTER:** Parker House rolls are really all about the butter! Melted butter adds tender richness to our dough, further solidifying its enriched dough status. Plus, an extra brush of Garlic Butter both inside and on top of the rolls ensures a rich, buttery bite.

**EGGS:** The addition of an egg in this dough not only adds richness via the yolk but also helps with leavening. Much like the leavening power eggs lend to cakes and cookies, the water in the egg white helps create steam that puffs up the dough once it encounters the warmth of the oven.

**ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR:** All-purpose wheat flour contains just enough protein to help build and maintain a strong gluten structure but is also soft enough to keep your rolls from becoming overly tough. The resulting rolls are soft and pillowy, with the structure to support multiple rises.

**KOSHER SALT:** As a general rule of thumb, the ratio of salt to flour in breads is 1.8% to 2% of flour weight. It's important to weigh your salt because different salt crystals measure differently. Dough without enough salt easily overferments. Salt also helps with crust color and enhances flavor.





# PARKER HOUSE ROLLS



## PARKER HOUSE ROLLS

Makes 24 rolls

*Everything is better with butter, and these Parker House Rolls are no exception! In our slight twist on the classic, pillowy rectangles of enriched dough get a brush of aromatic Garlic Butter before being shaped into their famed fold, brushed with a little more Garlic Butter, and baked to golden perfection. Finished with a final coating of Garlic Butter punctuated with fresh parsley, these rolls are a timeless New England classic you'll bake again and again.*

- ½ cup (120 grams) warm water (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)
- 5 tablespoons (60 grams) granulated sugar, divided
- 4½ teaspoons (14 grams) active dry yeast
- 1¼ cups (300 grams) warm whole milk (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)
- ¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted and warm (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 5 cups (625 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 4 teaspoons (12 grams) kosher salt
- Garlic Butter (recipe follows)
- 1 tablespoon (2 grams) chopped fresh parsley

1. In a large bowl, whisk together ½ cup (120 grams) warm water, 2 teaspoons (8 grams) sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. Whisk in warm milk, melted butter, and egg.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and remaining 4 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon (52 grams) sugar. Add to yeast mixture, and stir with a wooden spoon or spatula until dough comes together. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface. Using a floured bowl scraper or floured hands, flatten dough to about 1-inch thickness. Fold dough in half toward you; using heels of your hands, push dough away. Rotate dough 90 degrees; repeat flattening, folding, pushing, and rotating until slightly sticky but smooth and elastic,

6 to 7 minutes, lightly flouring work surface and bowl scraper or hands as needed. (Dough should pass the windowpane test; see Note.) Shape into a smooth round. (If you would like to use a mixer, see Mixer Instructions.)

3. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.

4. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Butter a 13x9-inch baking pan.

5. Punch down dough, and let stand for 10 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and preshape into a rectangle. Roll dough into a 16x12-inch rectangle. Using a sharp knife or a pastry wheel, cut into 24 (4x2-inch) rectangles. Working with 1 rectangle at a time, brush dough with Garlic Butter. Fold rectangle crosswise so top half hangs over bottom half by about ¼ inch. Place in prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and Garlic Butter, shingling rolls as they are placed in pan (4 rows of 6). Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 10 to 20 minutes.

6. Brush dough with Garlic Butter.

7. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 20 to 25 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking.

8. Add parsley to Garlic Butter; brush hot rolls with parsley Garlic Butter. Serve hot.

**Note:** *To use the windowpane test to check dough for proper gluten development, lightly flour hands and pinch off (don't tear) a small piece of dough. Slowly pull the dough out from the center. If the dough is ready, you will be able to stretch it until it's thin and translucent like a windowpane. If the dough tears, it's not quite ready. Knead (or beat) for 1 minute, and test again.*

## MIXER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together ½ cup (120 grams) warm water, 2 teaspoons (8 grams) sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. Whisk in warm milk, melted butter, and egg.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together 5 cups (625 grams) flour, salt, and remaining 4 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon (52 grams) sugar. Add to yeast mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until dough comes together.

3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a smooth, elastic, somewhat sticky dough forms, 12 to 14 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and dough hook; add up to ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. (Dough should pass the windowpane test but may still stick slightly to the bottom of bowl.) Turn out dough onto a very lightly floured surface, and gently shape into a ball. Proceed with recipe as directed.

## GARLIC BUTTER

Makes about ¼ cup

- ⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter
- ¾ teaspoon (2 grams) granulated garlic
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt

1. In a small saucepan, heat all ingredients over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, butter is melted, and salt dissolves, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool slightly before using.





# HAND-MIXING YOUR DOUGH

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We take you through mixing and kneading your dough, no mixer required



1. In a large bowl, whisk together  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (120 grams) warm water, 2 teaspoons (8 grams) sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. Whisk in warm milk, melted butter, and egg.

# HAND-MIXING YOUR DOUGH

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2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, and remaining 4 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon (52 grams) sugar. Add to yeast mixture, and stir with a wooden spoon or spatula until dough comes together.

# HAND-MIXING YOUR DOUGH

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3. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface. Using a floured bowl scraper or floured hands, flatten dough to about 1-inch thickness. Fold dough in half toward you; using heels of your hands, push dough away. Rotate dough 90 degrees; repeat flattening, folding, pushing, and rotating until slightly sticky but smooth and elastic, 6 to 7 minutes, lightly flouring work surface and bowl scraper or hands as needed. Shape into a smooth round. Hand-kneading an enriched dough can be a sticky situation since you don't want it to get too stiff by adding too much flour. After turning it out of the bowl, using a bowl scraper dusted with flour makes it much easier to do the kneading. You can use it the whole time or just until the dough is more manageable. We want the dough to be slightly sticky, so if you use your hands, it is important to make quick movements so the dough won't want to stick to your hands as much. After kneading, your dough should pass the windowpane test, as demonstrated in the second-to-last photo.
4. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.



# PERFECTING THE PARKER HOUSE ROLL FOLD

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Shaping these rolls is relatively easy, but your ruler will be your best friend when portioning out your dough. Even measurements ensure uniform rolls and consistent bake time.



**1. Punch down dough, and let stand for 10 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and preshape into a rectangle. Roll dough into a 16x12-inch rectangle. Using a sharp knife or a pastry wheel, cut into 24 (4x2-inch) rectangles.** It often helps to give yourself markers to ensure that each roll is cut to a similar size. For these rolls, you'll start by measuring along the longest side of your dough, scoring the dough every 4 inches at both the top and bottom. Using a ruler to guide your blade, cut your 4-inch sections. From there, you'll measure along the shorter side of your dough, marking every 2 inches. Repeat on the other side of the dough and then use your ruler to guide your blade as you slice across.



# PERFECTING THE PARKER HOUSE ROLL FOLD

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2. Working with 1 rectangle at time, brush dough with Garlic Butter. Fold rectangle crosswise so top half hangs over bottom half by about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Place in prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and Garlic Butter, shingling rolls as they are placed in pan (4 rows of 6). Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 10 to 20 minutes.

# BUTTER BRUSHING BEFORE BAKING

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3. Brush dough with Garlic Butter.

4. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 20 to 25 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking.



# BUTTER BRUSHING AFTER BAKING

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5. Add parsley to Garlic Butter; brush hot rolls with parsley Garlic Butter. Serve hot.

# MAKE IT WITH A MIXER!

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Looking to save a little time and make a little less of a mess? Time to fire up that mixer!



## MIXER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (120 grams) warm water, 2 teaspoons (8 grams) sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. Whisk in warm milk, melted butter, and egg.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together 5 cups (625 grams) flour, salt, and remaining 4 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon (52 grams) sugar. Add to yeast mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until dough comes together.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a smooth, elastic, somewhat sticky dough forms, 12 to 14 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and dough hook; add up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. (Dough should pass the windowpane test but may still stick slightly to the bottom of bowl.) Turn out dough onto a very lightly floured surface, and gently shape into a ball. Proceed with recipe as directed.