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America Eats.

HOME MADE YEAST.

Three long weeks the blizzard had raged around my log cabin, howling defiance and maledictions into my ears until I wanted to scream with "cabin fever." My sour dough had frozen ten days before when the thermometer went down, down, down, and finally out. Twenty-one days of weather when it never reached a "high" of forty below! My yeast cakes were ruined, and now I couldn't even resort to the frontier bread made with sour dough. I couldn't even make "starter." I realized it would be impossible for me to replace the leavening by sending to the store at Ennis. By the time yeast made the long trip to the Upper Madison by stage, it would be worthless. I was frantic. Being a young bride, I was conscious that my cookery ~~wasn't~~ wasn't perfect; I had a hungry man to feed three times a day. We all know that bread is the staff of life, and I dreaded the moments when my husband was compelled to sit down to meals where corn pone, Sally Lunn, and baking powder biscuits were monotonously repeated day after day.

Taking advantage of the first bright sunny day, when it was only ten below, I waxed my skiis, put the harness on my big shepherd dog, I was bound for my nearest neighbor eight miles away. Rags pulled me over the heavy crust with ease, and as I flew along, my face smarting, eyes watering from the cold air, I wondered what had happened to the old lady who had lived in this God-forsaken country so long.

I rushed into my old friend's cabin, eager for a talk with another woman, and for motherly advice. An hour later, I chirped "Let's go!" to my faithful dog, with a smile on my lips, and a song in my heart. I was homeward bound, and under one arm was a large golden brown loaf of bread baked the day before, while in the pocket of my mackinaw was the quaintest recipe for homemade yeast. Thank heaven the cold had not penetrated the root cellar! There were plenty of potatoes!

Arriving home and noting the time, I hastily prepared the potatoes, as they cooked, I counted on my fingers--in nine days--it seemed a century--I would have a small crock of yeast,and from my own oven, I'd be taking golden brown loaves of the Staff of Life.

Setting aside one cupful of mashed potatoes, I added a tablespoon of sugar and a teaspoonful of salt, then mixed my three ingredients thoroughly. I even patted the crock tenderly as I placed it carefully in a warm place.

Three days later, I added another cupful of mashed potatoes and stirred the contents of the little brown crock, I sniffed the brewing yeast and noted that it smelled very similar to cooking apples.

Impatiently, I waited for three more days to pass by, and then when I added the third and final cupful of freshly mashed potatoes, I rejoiced--I had yeast! One cup of this mixture was equal to one yeast cake, by always taking care to replace the cup of yeast with a cup of mashed potatoes, like the brook in the poem it would go on and on forever.

As long as I live I will never forget that first "batch" of bread and light rolls. They were perfect--tasty, light, fine of texture. My homemade yeast was adaptable to every leavening necessity.