

Quick & Crusty French Baguettes

2 cups very warm water

1 packet yeast (7gms)

2 tablespoons sugar

1 1/2 teaspoon salt

3-4 cups flour

1 Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

2 In a large bowl, whisk together the warm water, yeast, and sugar. Set the bowl on top of your preheating oven for ten minutes. Stir in the salt and add the flour a half-cup at a time, until the dough becomes soft but not sticky. Knead the dough until elastic.

3 Cut the dough into four even pieces. Roll each of them into four long, thin ropes. Twist together two of the ropes to form one loaf. Twist the other two ropes together to form a second loaf. Transfer both onto a large baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

4 You can now bake the loaf right away (if you're in a hurry) or allow it to rise for an additional 15-30 minutes on top of your warm oven.

5 Now for the SECRET: Fill a large bowl with 3-4 cups of ice. Open your hot oven and place the baking sheet with the baguettes inside, then toss the ice cubes on the bottom of the oven and quickly shut the door. Do NOT open your oven for 15 minutes. Bake until golden brown, about 15-18 minutes.

6 Serve fresh and hot with your favorite olive oil for dipping.

