**Active Dry & Instant Yeast: Best Tips for Working with Yeast**

<https://www.thekitchn.com/active-dry-instant-yeast-best-tips-for-working-with-yeast-180312>

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As [Cambria can attest](https://www.thekitchn.com/crying-in-the-kitchen-when-a-recipe-and-your-confidence-goes-awry-179695), there are few things more disappointing than anticipating a warm slice of fresh-baked bread only to realize halfway through the recipe that your yeast is kaput. No tears, my friends! Yeast can be a tricky little scamp, but it need not be your foe.

Active dry yeast and instant (or rapid-rise) yeast are the two most common yeasts available to us as home bakers. The two yeasts [can be used interchangeably](https://www.thekitchn.com/whats-the-difference-between-active-dry-yeast-and-instant-yeast-54252) in recipes, but active dry yeast needs to be dissolved in water before using while instant yeast can be mixed right into the dough.

Call me old-fashioned, but I prefer baking with active dry yeast. Dissolving the yeast in whatever liquid is being used in the recipe only takes an extra minute or two, and I like to know that my yeast has completely dissolved and is ready to go.

• **Check Yeast By Dissolving It with Sugar:** If you’d like some extra yeast insurance or suspect that your yeast may be a little old, there’s an easy way to make sure it’s still active. Measure out the liquid (room temperature or lukewarm!) for your recipe and pour about a half-cup of it into a bowl. Sprinkle the yeast and a pinch of sugar over the top, give it a stir, and let it stand for a few minutes. If the yeast is still active, it will dissolve completely into the water and the liquid will start bubbling.

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• **Keep Rising Dough Warm:** Yeast works best at temperatures between 70°F and 80°F. If your house is cool in the winter, place the bowl somewhere warmer, like the top of a fridge or in a warm (but turned off!) oven. If you put the dough on a heater to rise, insulate the bottom of the bowl with a few fluffy towels. If your house is very warm, the dough may rise more quickly than expected.

• **Butter, Eggs, Milk, and Sugar Slow Down Yeast Activity:** If you’re making a bread with a lot of these ingredients, the bread may rise more slowly or not quite as much as usual. There’s nothing wrong with the bread or your yeast; recipes for rich breads like cinnamon rolls, monkey bread, and Christmas braids just require patience.

• **Store Unused Yeast in the Freezer:** Freezing yeast [will put it on pause](https://www.thekitchn.com/longer-lasting-yeast-store-dry-yeast-in-the-freezer-179315) and extend its active lifespan long past the expiration date. Seal the yeast in an airtight container before freezing.

Above all else when working with yeast, just remember that it’s a living thing. There are conditions that help it thrive and conditions that slow it down. Treat it kindly and make it comfy, and you’ll be turning out beautiful rolls and loaves in no time.