

recipe for white soda bread:

450g/1lb/3 three quarter cups flour (plain flour)

1 tsp sugar

1 tsp salt

1 tsp breadsoda/bicarbonate of soda - sieved

buttermilk or sour milk: 350 - 425ml/12-15fl ozs/ 1 and a half - 2 cups

Heat oven to 230C/450F/Regulo 8

Sieve dry ingredients and mix.

Make well in centre and pour in most of milk - judge then if you need more or not. The dough should be soft but not wet or sticky. Bring dough together, onto floured board, knead for a few seconds just to tidy it up, make into a round about one and a half inches deep, cut a cross on top with knife.

15 minutes in oven, lower heat to 200C/400F/Regulo 6 for 30 minutes. Tap bottom (of loaf!) - hollow sound means it is done. Cool on wire rack, cover with a damp teatowel if you prefer a soft crust.

Butter and strawberry jam at this time of year are perfect.

Variation: add a handful of dried fruit (sultanas, currants, raisins) before the milk to make "currant cake".