



Russian Prosphora Recipe

I usually find that a 5 pound bag (2.26 kg) of flour yields about fifty prosphoras (depending on the size).

Using a five pound bag of flour, pour approximately 1/4 of the bag into a mixing bowl, add a pinch of salt or about 1/2 teaspoon to the flour and then pour boiling hot water into this flour and mix to a pasty consistency (until all the flour from this 1/4 amount is mixed). I use the same proportion to start for 20 lbs of flour — yielding approximately 200 prosphoras.

Set the mixture aside and allow to cool for approximately 60 minutes. Once cool enough to comfortably touch, add yeast (one packet of yeast or 2 teaspoons of Fleischmann's Bread Machine Yeast, which is what I use) to 2 cups of warm water. Pour the yeast mixture into the warm dough mix. Begin to add the rest of the flour, knead well for about 15- 20 minutes. I used to do it by hand which is a nice work out , but now use a baker's mixer.

Knead the dough until it becomes bouncy or rubbery when compressed — a bit like play dough consistency. It should not stick to your fingers. Cover and seal the bowl with foil to prevent the dough from drying out.

Let rise for 2 - 3 hours until double in size. When ready, knead the dough again for about 5 minutes and roll to desired thickness (prosphora bottoms should be twice the height of the tops).

I bake the prosphoras on professional baker's cookie sheets. This gives an even baking temperature. I pre-heat the sheets, take a real bees wax candle, and cover the sheet with a light layer. This gives me a non stick surface.

After cutting out the bottoms and placing them on the sheet, use a smaller diameter cutter for the tops. Press the prosphora seal onto the tops. Using a pastry brush, liberally brush the prosphora bottoms with water. Place the tops with the seal on top of each prosphora bottom. I find that the extra water that stays on the sheet will evaporate as you bake, providing the extra humidity needed during baking.

After the prosphora shapes are completed and pin holes are made, make the sign of the cross over each sheet three times. Cover each sheet lightly with foil. Place in preheated 350 -352 degree oven. Once more, cross the baking sheets 3 times and bake covered for 20 minutes with the foil (this prevents the prosphora from rising too quickly when baking).

After 20 minutes remove the foil and switch the top baking sheet with the bottom to evenly bake. Continue to bake for another 20 minutes.

Remove the prosphoras from the sheet cover and allow to cool.

Once prosphoras cool after a few hours, place in freezer bags and freeze until needed. Take prosphoras out the night before liturgy and just leave the bag open. By morning they are just as

fresh as baked. The prosphoras come out well formed and well compacted in consistency (they don't crumble as much).

Yours in Christ,

protodeacon Pavel Wolkow

