

French Bread (2 loaves)

2 ½ cups warm water
2 tablespoons shortening
6 ½ - 7 cups flour
2 packages dry yeast
2 teaspoons salt
4 teaspoons sugar

In a large bowl thoroughly mix 2 cups flour, sugar, salt and dry yeast. Combine water and shortening. Heat over low heat until warm. Shortening does not have to melt. Gradually add to dry ingredients and beat 2 minutes on medium speed of mixer. Add ¾ cup flour or enough to make a thick batter. Beat at higher speed for 2 minutes. Add more flour to make a soft dough. Place in greased bowl, turning to grease top. Let rise until double (50-60 minutes). Roll out and roll up to make long loaf, tapering ends by rolling gently between hands. Place sealed edge down on greased baking sheet. Make diagonal slashes with blade. Brush with cold water. Let rise until light (25-30 min). Brush with cold water again. Bake at 375° with pan of water on bottom of oven 35-40 minutes.