

Rising Time: About 1 hour
Oven Temperature: 450°F., then 400°F.
Baking Time: 30 to 35 minutes

Prosciutto Ring

Makes: An 8 1/2-inch by 2-inch high ring
 1 pound, 5 ounces / 596 grams

INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	WEIGHT	
	<i>volume</i>	<i>ounces</i>	<i>grams</i>
bread flour or unbleached all purpose flour, preferably Gold medal	2 cups plus 3 tablespoons 2 1/4 cups plus 2 tablespoons	12 ounces	340 grams
malt powder or barley malt syrup, honey, or sugar	1 tablespoon 1 tablespoon 1 tablespoon	0.3 ounce 0.7 ounce 0.5 ounce	9.3 grams 21 grams 12.5 grams
salt	3/4 teaspoon	•	5 grams
black pepper, coarsely cracked	scant 1/2 teaspoon	•	0.8 grams
instant yeast (also known as Instant Active Dry, Perfect Rise, Rapid Rise, and QuickRise)	3/4 teaspoon	•	2.4 grams
water, room temperature (70 to 90°F.) (cold if using a food processor)	1 liquid cup	8.3 ounces	236 grams
prosciutto, without the fat, sliced not too thin and cut into 1/4 to 1/2 inch pieces	3/4 cup	3 ounces	85 grams
melted bacon fat or butter	4 teaspoons	0.6 ounce	18.6 grams

Equipment: A large baking sheet lined with Silpain liner or parchment. A baking stone or baking sheet.

1) Mix the dough

Food Processor Method

In a food processor bowl with metal blades add the bread flour or unbleached all purpose flour, the malt, honey, or sugar, salt, and black pepper, and process for a few seconds to mix. Add the yeast and process again for a few seconds.

With the motor running, gradually pour in the cold water. Process for 45 seconds after the dough comes together. It should be slightly tacky (sticky). Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured counter and lightly flour the dough. Press it into a rectangle and sprinkle it with the prosciutto. Roll up the dough and knead it to incorporate the prosciutto evenly. (The dough should weigh about 1 1/2 pounds / 675 grams.) Dust it lightly with flour and cover it with plastic wrap. Allow it to relax for 20 minutes.

Mixer Method

In a mixer bowl whisk together the bread flour or unbleached all purpose flour, the malt, honey, or sugar, black pepper, and yeast. Then whisk in the salt.

Using the dough hook on low speed (#2 Kitchen Aid) add the 1 cup of water and mix about 1 minute, until the flour is moistened.

Knead the dough on medium speed (#4 Kitchen Aid) for 7 minutes. Add the prosciutto and mix on low speed (#2 Kitchen Aid) for 1 minute or until evenly incorporated. The dough should be very elastic and jump back when pressed with a finger tip. The dough should still be a little tacky (sticky) but not cling to the fingers. If the dough is very sticky knead in a little flour. If it is too stiff spray it with a little water and knead it in. (The dough should weigh about 1 1/2 pounds / 675 grams.) Dust it lightly with flour and cover it with plastic wrap. Allow it to relax for 20 minutes.

Hand Method

In a large bowl whisk together the bread flour or unbleached all purpose flour, the malt or sugar, black pepper, and yeast. Then whisk in the salt.

Add the water and stir with a wooden spoon or one hand, until the flour is moistened.

Empty the dough onto a counter and knead it for 10 minutes or until the dough is very elastic and jumps back when pressed with a finger tip. The dough should be a little tacky (sticky) but not cling to the fingers. Knead in the prosciutto. If the dough is very sticky knead in a little flour. (The dough will weigh about 1 1/2 pounds / 675 grams.) Dust it lightly with flour and cover it with plastic wrap. Allow it to relax for 20 minutes.

Bread Machine Method

In the bread machine container, place the water, salt, malt, honey, or sugar, bread flour or unbleached_all purpose, black pepper, and yeast (in that order). Put it through the dough cycle (mix 3 minutes, knead 5 minutes). Let it rest for 20 minutes. Add the prosciutto and do a second dough cycle of mix 3 minutes and knead 5. The dough should be a little tacky (sticky) but not cling to the fingers. If necessary, remove it from the machine and knead in a little more flour. (The dough will weigh about 1 1/2 pounds / 675 grams.)

All Methods

2) Shape the dough and let it rise

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured counter and roll it into an 18-inch long rope. Overlap the ends by 2 inches and press lightly to seal, to form a ring about 7 inches in diameter, about 1 1/4 inches high and with a 3 inch hole in the center.

Set it on Silpain or parchment and cover it with a large container or oiled plastic wrap. Allow the dough to rise (ideally at 75°F to 80°F) until almost doubled, and when pressed

gently with a finger the depression very slowly fills in, about 1hour. It will be almost 9 inches by 1 1/2 inches high.

3) Preheat the oven

1 hour before baking time preheat the oven to 450°F. Have the oven shelf at the lowest level and place a baking stone or baking sheet on it and a cast iron pan or sheet pan on the floor of the oven before preheating.

4) Bake and glaze the bread

Shortly before baking, brush the surface of the dough all over with melted bacon fat or butter. Do not slash the dough. Using the Silpain liner, lift the ring (using a peel if it is on parchment) onto the hot baking stone or hot baking sheet. Toss 1/2 cup of ice cubes into the pan beneath and 20 minutes. Turn down the heat to 400°F. and continue baking 10 to 15 minutes or until deep golden brown. (An instant read thermometer inserted into the center will read about 211°F.). (Halfway through baking, with a heavy pancake turner lift the bread from the pan and set it directly on the stone so that it is turned halfway around for even baking.) Allow the bread to stay in the oven for 5 minutes with the oven off and door slightly ajar. Remove the bread to a rack and brush with another coat of melted bacon or butter.

5) Cool the bread

Remove the bread from the oven, lift it from the pan, and transfer it to a wire rack to cool completely, top-side up. The texture of this bread is most appealing when torn rather than cut. It stays fresh for 2 days room temperature.

Pointers for Success

♥ Refrigerated water of about 46°F. will result in a dough of about 84°F. after processing. It cools to 79°F. after kneading in the prosciutto. It is also possible to freeze the water for 5 or 10 minutes before adding it so that the initial temperature of the mixed dough is below 80°F. This is a stiff dough so it really heats up. The cold water does not harm the yeast because it heats up so quickly. Freezing the flour for at least 15 minutes will also help to keep the dough cooler after mixing.