

books. But they're just as likely to quiz each other about which setting results in the most attractively burnished crust.

Grosscup noted an Australian study's findings that people with wide networks of good friends and confidantes live 20 percent longer than those with fewer friends. "Friends give you a broader perspective on life," he said. (Researchers at the Flinders University Centre for Ageing Studies in Adelaide found that friends are even more important than families for longevity.)

The runners range in age from 65 to 74, and while they all began jogging in south Minneapolis, their routes have changed as some have moved to downtown Minneapolis or Bloomington. Geography alone could have jinxed the group, but fresh bread kept them together. They can get positively philosophical about it.

"You have to be willing to fail -- that goes for bread, as well as life," said Patrykus.

Karin Grosscup, a spouse who also runs (and eats), summed up the group's appeal this way: "When the weather is averse and you still run, it helps with the denial of death," she said, half-laughing. "Our heels are in the ground and we want to slow things down."

Mastering the elements, then returning for a meal of simple sustenance has worked for 20 years. "It's been a great run," Grosscup said. It's not over yet.

JIM MARTIN: Panasonic Model SDBT56P

"I've been using it since about 1991. (I'm on my second one.) It makes a small enough loaf that we can finish it off before it has gotten too dry, stale or moldy. On the negative side (and this just may be operator error), it's sometimes hard to get a rise out of it when using a 100 percent whole-wheat recipe."

CINNAMON RAISIN BREAD SUPREME

Makes 1½-pound loaf.

2 cups white bread flour

1 tablespoon canola oil

1½ teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 cup raisins

1 cup milk

2 teaspoons bread machine yeast

Proceed according to machine directions.

JIM PATRYKUS: Oster Model 5638 E189629

"I've used it for 12 years and it has not failed me in any way. And it has a wealth of settings! For bread: basic, French, sweet, whole wheat, express (58 minutes) and express (80 minutes) and three settings for crust. I usually opt for the 'simpler is better' approach to equipment, but now I appreciate all these features/possibilities. I check it occasionally through the first 20 to 30 minutes to be sure the liquid/flour ration is working. Sometimes the stir paddle does not 'reach' all the mixture that clings towards the top, so I simply take a spatula and assist the process."

PANETTONE ITALIAN HOLIDAY BREAD

Makes 1½-pound loaf.

½ cup water

2 whole eggs, plus 2 egg yolks

¼ cup sugar

2 teaspoons bread machine yeast

2¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons white bread flour

1 teaspoon salt

4 tablespoons butter

½ cup raisins

¼ cup candied citrus peel (see recipe below)

Proceed according to machine directions.

CANDIED CITRUS PEEL

Peel from 1 orange or lemon

1/3 cup water

1/3 cup sugar

Using a vegetable peeler, thinly peel orange or lemon rind, avoiding the white pith, which is bitter. Chop to the desired texture.

In a small saucepan, combine water and sugar. Bring to a boil, swirling mixture until clear. Add chopped peel and boil gently for 5 minutes. Let cool, then drain well before adding to bread mixture.

DAN COLE: Toastmaster Bread Box, Model 1195

"I'm on my second bread machine. The first one was the original Bread Machine and it vibrated off the kitchen counter one day and crashed to the floor. My current bread machine has been churning dough for as many years as I've been running. I had to replace the paddle in it once. The most challenging thing about making the bread is to remember to put in all of the ingredients in the order listed, and to be there to take the bread out when the beeper sounds."

WHEAT OAT WALNUT BREAD

Makes 1½-pound loaf.

1¼ cups water

2 tablespoons coconut oil

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons sugar

1½ tablespoons dry milk

½ cup oatmeal

1 cup whole wheat flour

1½ cup white bread flour

2 teaspoon bread machine yeast

Handful of chopped walnuts

Proceed according to machine directions.

JEFF GROSSCUP: Zojirushi Bread Machine

"I like the fact that it produces a horizontal loaf, has a quick bread cycle (2:18) and has two mixing paddles. Dislike? I think this machine may overmix the dough, causing the raisins to get mashed up. Add raisins at absolutely the last opportunity."

HEARTY CRACKED WHEAT BREAKFAST BREAD

Makes a 2-pound loaf.

Note: May need to add more water during mixing cycle for best dough consistency.

1½ cups water

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 cups white bread flour

1 cup whole wheat flour

1 cup coarse cracked wheat

¼ cup dry milk

1½ teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons brown sugar

2½ teaspoons bread machine yeast

Proceed according to machine directions.

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