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Japanese Milk Bread (Shokupan) (Video) 食

パン

3 HRS 35 MINS



by [Nami](#)

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Easy Japanese Recipes for Everyday Home Cooking

Konnichiwa, I'm Nami. Born and raised in Japan, I'm the founder and recipe creator behind Just One Cookbook, the largest English-language website for Japanese recipes. Since 2011, I've tested and shared 1,200 authentic, easy-to-follow recipes with step-by-step photos to help anyone cook delicious Japanese food at home.

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Homemade Japanese Milk Bread (Shokupan) is possibly the best white bread you'll ever taste! Its milky-sweet taste and pillowy-soft texture are perfect for breakfast toast and sandwiches. In this recipe, I share my best tips so you can make this iconic loaf at home.

Weeknight Dinners



Spicy Garlic Chicken



Okonomiyaki Recipe (Video) お好み焼き

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Growing up in Japan, I ate **Japanese milk bread** called **shokupan** (食パン) every morning for breakfast. Sometimes called Hokkaido milk bread, this enriched Pullman loaf is

incredibly delicate and fluffy with a subtly sweet and milky taste. With my step-by-step instructions in this recipe, even a beginner home baker can make this iconic loaf. There's nothing more delicious than homemade shokupan, and I'm confident you'll fall in love with it like I have!

If you love Japanese bread, try my [Black Sesame Milk Bread](#), [Curry Bread](#) (*Kare Pan*), and [Melon Pan](#) recipes next!

What is Japanese Milk Bread (Shokupan)?

The Portuguese first introduced bread to Japan in 1543—that's why we call it *pan*, from the Portuguese *pão* meaning “bread.” Yet, it wasn't consumed regularly by the Japanese; neither was British round-topped white bread called *honshoku pan* (本食パン) introduced in the late 1800s. After World War II, the American Resident Army brought the flat-topped Pullman loaf to Japan for sandwiches to feed stationed soldiers. Japanese bakers gradually adapted it to suit the local palate, and shokupan was born. Now sold across the country, Japanese milk bread is a staple food and popular alternative to rice that has become a huge part of Japanese food culture.



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- What is Japanese Milk Bread (Shokupan)?
- Why I Love This Recipe
- Ingredients for Shokupan

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Why I Love This Recipe

With my tips, techniques, and a little practice, you'll master how to make the most delicious Japanese milk bread at home!

- ♥ **For bakers of any skill level** – I break down the multi-step process of making shokupan into clear tasks. It's manageable even for a beginner baker.

♥ **Makes a fast loaf of bread –**

I *love* how easy and perfect this recipe is. I can finish making a fantastic shokupan in just 3.5 hours from start to finish!

♥ **Uses everyday ingredients –**

The delicate balance of buttery, milky, and slightly sweet flavors comes from just seven common ingredients found in your pantry and fridge.

♥ **Your stand mixer does the work –** Save some elbow grease and let your Kitchen Aid stand mixer knead the dough! My method makes the most of your favorite kitchen appliance for hassle-free dough kneading.

♥ **Light as a cloud and fluffy as cotton!** – I'll show you how to make the most tender and irresistible white bread you've ever tasted!



Ingredients for Shokupan

(Baker's percentages in parentheses)

- **Warm water (71%)** – at 104°F (40°C)
- **Sugar (6%)** – I use organic cane sugar
- Diamond Crystal **kosher salt (2%)**
- **Honey (3%)**
- **Instant yeast (2%)**
- **Bread flour (100%)**

- **Skim milk powder or nonfat dry milk powder (6%)**
- **Unsalted butter (7%)** – for the bread dough; plus more to grease the pan
- **Neutral oil** – for greasing the bowl

Find the **printable recipe** with measurements below.

[JUMP TO RECIPE ↓](#)



Substitutions

- **Instant yeast:** You can use the following yeast interchangeably:
Instant yeast = RapidRise® yeast = quick-rise yeast = bread machine yeast. I use Fleischmann's® **bread machine yeast**. To substitute active dry yeast, use the same amount per the recipe or up to 25% more;

please give it a try and adjust.

Proof active yeast first by dissolving it in a portion of the warm water from the recipe before adding it to the rest of the ingredients. Please DO NOT use old yeast that's more than 6 months old.

- **Dry milk powder:** Skim and nonfat dry milk powders differ. Skim milk powder has 34% protein while nonfat dry milk powder has 18%. In Japan, shokupan is made with skim milk powder. Here in the US, you can only find nonfat dry milk powder, and I use Bob's Red Mill brand. For a vegan alternative, you can use [coconut milk powder](#). Please avoid soy milk powder as the dough does not rise well.
- **Unsalted butter:** I use Kerrygold brand. For a vegan alternative, I recommend Miyoko's unsalted vegan butter as a substitute. Please DO NOT use salted butter. For greasing the pan, you can substitute cooking oil spray.
- **Bread flour:** Please do not substitute with all-purpose flour if you want to make a proper shokupan. For the dough to rise

high enough, you will need the higher protein that bread flour has. I use [King Arthur bread flour](#), which is 12.7% protein—a whole point higher than other US brands.

Key Kitchen Tools

Precision is required for a successful outcome. Those few grams of liquid or dry ingredients do make a difference. You may need to buy some special kitchen and baking tools you do not have yet. I'm confident you'll love the results and find these tools worth purchasing.



- **A lidded Pullman loaf pan** – If you want to make true shokupan at home, then you have to get a rectangular lidded [1.5 kin loaf pan](#) (4.7 in. x 7.8 in. x 5.1 in.) and/or a square lidded [1 kin loaf](#)

pan (4.7 in. x 5.3 in. x 5.1 in.)
from Asai Shoten (浅井商店) in
Japan. The loaf size in Japan is
measured in “*kin* (斤),” an old
Japanese unit for measuring
bread weight. The British-style
round-topped bread was 1 pound
(450 g) back then and was called
“1 *kin*.” Continue reading more in
my [Japanese Loaf Pans:
Where to Buy and Care
Instructions](#) post.

- [KitchenAid Artisan Series
stand mixer](#) – 5 QT, 325 watts; I
do not recommend the bowl-lift
Professional Series with a spiral
hook unless you double the
rectangular loaf recipe.
- **C-dough hook**
- **Digital [kitchen scale](#)**
- **Large bowl**
- [Dough scraper](#)
- [Rolling pin](#)
- **Misting bottle** – for spraying
water on the round-topped loaf
- **Wire rack**
- [Bread knife](#)
- Nice-to-haves:
 - [Flour duster](#) or shaker
 - [Plastic bags](#) – for storing
your loaf

- From your kitchen:
 - **Tea towel**
 - **Plastic wrap**



How to Make Japanese Milk Bread

Making the Dough

Step 1 – Weigh the ingredients and mix together. In a large bowl, combine the warm water, sugar, salt, and honey. Whisk in the instant yeast and let it sit in a warm place until a

foamy surface forms. In the stand mixer bowl, whisk together the bread flour and dry milk powder. Pour the liquid mixture into the dry ingredients and combine with a spatula.



Step 2 – Knead the dough with a stand mixer until shiny, silky, soft, and smooth. Stir on Speed 2 until well combined, then increase to Speed 4 for 4 minutes until it's a bit smoother. Mix in the butter cubes on low speed, then increase again to Speed 4 for 4 minutes. Finally, knead at Speed 6 for 3 minutes while holding down your mixer. Check the dough's elasticity with the windowpane test.



Step 3 – Slam and fold the dough, then let it rise for 40 minutes. Pick up the dough ball, slam its smooth

side onto a dusted work surface, and fold the dough in half. Slam the smooth side down again, but this time fold it in the opposite direction. Repeat three more times while alternating folding directions. Form the dough into a ball and place in a large greased bowl. Cover and let rise until it triples in size.



Dividing and Shaping

Step 4 – Divide and shape the dough into rectangles. Invert the dough onto your work surface and gently press to deflate it. Form it into a ball with the smooth side up. Weigh and divide the dough into three equal pieces. Form them into taut balls, cover with a damp towel, and let rest for 15 minutes.



Step 5 – Make the dough rolls and place in the pan. Form one ball into a flat rectangle with a rolling pin. Fold the rectangular dough in thirds lengthwise, then roll it up and pinch the edges to seal. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Brush the shokupan mold with butter, place the rolls in it, and cover with plastic.



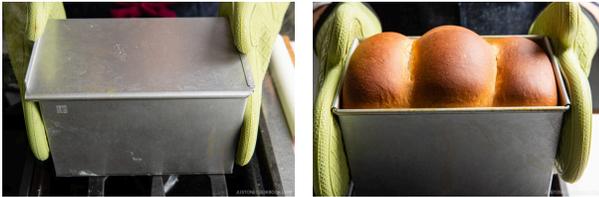
Step 6 – Proof the dough and preheat the oven. Let the dough rise for about 1 hour until it's 75–80% of the mold's height for a flat-topped loaf or 85–90% for a round-topped loaf. When you have 30 minutes of proof time remaining, start preheating the oven to 425°F (220°C) with the rack set to a lower position.



Baking

Step 7 – Lower the oven temperature and bake the bread.

For flat-topped shokupan, reduce the temperature to 415°F (210°C) and bake for 25–30 minutes. For round-topped shokupan, lower to 385°F (195°C) and bake for 30 minutes.



Cooling

Step 8 – Cool the shokupan completely on a wire rack. Remove the shokupan mold from the oven and drop the pan firmly on the work surface once or twice. This allows the water vapors to escape. Remove the lid and unmold the bread onto a wire rack. Let it cool for 2–3 hours, then slice when completely cooled.



How to Slice Japanese Milk Bread

It's essential to slice the loaf only once it is **completely cool**.

Otherwise, the bread will be too soft and difficult to slice neatly. I use a **bread knife**, and it is incredible how easily I can slice bread without a struggle!

Following are the precise thicknesses of shokupan toast and sandwich slices in Japan, based on the **standard square loaf size (1 *kin*)**.

No, I don't follow these rules exactly, and my slices are often uneven!

- 4 slices — 3 cm (for toast)
- 5 slices — 2.4 cm (for toast)
- 6 slices — 2 cm (for toast)
- 8 slices — 1.5 cm (for toast and sandwiches)
- 10 slices — 1.2 cm (for sandwiches)
- 12 slices — 1 cm (for sandwiches)



Nami's Recipe Tips

- » **Weigh your ingredients**
 - I cannot stress how important this is in baking. Precise measurement is vital for this recipe; therefore, please weigh your ingredients with a kitchen scale. I strongly discourage using a cup or volume measurement.

- » **Use the windowpane test** – How do you know when to stop kneading? That's where the windowpane test comes in handy as a helpful way to check the dough's elasticity. Here's how to do it: Pull off a small bit of dough. Gently stretch it into a square with your fingers until it becomes a thin film in the middle. If 1) it's a super-thin membrane, 2) light can pass through, and 3) there's no tearing, then the dough passes the windowpane test!

- » **Create a warm, humid environment for your dough** – The optimal temperature for fermenting and proofing bread dough is 86–95°F (30–35°C). I live in a fairly cool climate, so proofing dough was challenging until I got an oven with a proof setting. You can proof dough successfully without a special oven

setting, though. Simply place a baking pan or dish of boiling water on your oven's lower rack, then place the dough bowl on the upper rack. With the door closed, the oven stays warm and humid to create an ideal environment.

» **Avoid high/low proofing temperatures and direct sunlight**

– Dough proofed at temperatures lower than 86°F (30°C) will take longer to ferment or simply go dormant. Higher temperatures will cause the yeast to expand faster than the gluten structure can handle, and the dough's air bubbles will collapse. Even though it may seem like a warm location, avoid placing your dough in direct sunlight in the summertime as it gets too hot and develops a crust.

» **Create a smooth and taut surface on the dough**

– When you roll

and shape the dough ball, the skin you create on the outside will keep the carbon dioxide generated during fermentation from escaping. These air bubbles keep the bread plump and voluminous with a baked shape that's beautifully finished. See the recipe card for the two methods you can use to make a smooth, taut surface.

- » **Handle the dough gently like it's a baby!** – Always handle the dough with slow, gentle movements. Be careful not to stress the dough. You will damage it if you pull or tear the dough while you divide, roll, and shape it. With your gentle care, your bread will be even more delicious.



Variations and Customizations

There are fun and delicious variations on shokupan that you can try and I suggest a few of them here.

- **Make the two traditional shapes of Japanese milk bread.** I briefly mentioned above the two types. A **flat-topped** loaf is called *kakugata shokupan* (角型食パン), *kaku shokupan* (角食パン), or *kaku shoku* (角食; mainly in Hokkaido); and a **round-topped** loaf is called *yamagata shokupan* (山型食パン), *yama shokupan* (山食パン), or *yama shoku* (山食; in Hokkaido). The round-topped loaf is baked without a lid, which allows it to stretch upward and have a light and soft texture. On the other hand, the flat-topped

loaf is baked with a lid, so the evaporation of water is minimal; it has a moist and chewy texture.

- **Add black sesame seeds.** Nutty and earthy [Black Sesame Milk Bread](#) is one of my favorite types of shokupan to use in Japanese sandwiches.
- **Make raisin shokupan.** Add raisins to your dough to sweeten your milk bread! I like using golden raisins and add them gently at the end of kneading.
- **Make loaves in cute animal or heart shapes.** You can use this dough in molds of different shapes. You'll find bread pans in popular motifs like a bear, cat, bunny, heart, cylinder, small cubes, and more.
- **Make it vegan/vegetarian.** Substitute coconut milk powder and Miyoko's unsalted vegan butter for a delicious plant-based version.



Different Ways to Enjoy Japanese Milk Bread

Japanese milk bread is so versatile! There are many ways to use shokupan for breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner, and desserts. Here, I suggest some of my favorite ways to enjoy this sublime bread.

- **As simple toast** – Score the shokupan slice with a diamond pattern and toast it. Then, place a pat of butter on top. Add optional jam. Simple and delicious!
- **As loaded breakfast toast** – [Ogura Toast](#) is Nagoya's specialty breakfast topped with butter, sweet red bean paste, and whipped cream. You can also try my [6 Japanese Twists on Avocado Toast](#).
- **In pizza toast** – Japanese [Pizza Toast](#) with homemade sauce, ham, and cheese was my son's favorite after-school snack growing up!
- **In sandwiches** – Shokupan is the signature ingredient in many delicious Japanese-style

sandwiches like [Japanese Egg Sandwich](#) (Tamago Sandō), [Katsu Sandō](#), and [Japanese Fruit Sandwich](#) (Fruit Sandō).

- **As a sweet treat** – Don't throw out the crusts that you trimmed off! Repurpose them to make crispy [Shokupan Crust Rusks](#) coated in butter and sugar.
- **In desserts** – Use your leftover shokupan to make sweet and custardy [Pan Pudding](#) (Japanese Milk Bread Pudding) with caramel sauce. It simply melts in your mouth.



Storage Tips

To store at room temperature: This is the best storage method if you consume the bread within 1–2 days. Put your loaf in [a plastic bag](#) and keep it in a cool place out of direct

sunlight. I usually cut slices off the loaf as needed. On warm days, consume it within a day or store it in the freezer (make sure to slice first before freezing). Do not refrigerate the bread, as the cold air dries the bread.

To freeze: If you can't finish your bread within a day or two, freezing is the best choice. Cut the loaf into slices before freezing. It's typically recommended to wrap the individual slices in plastic wrap to avoid odor absorption and freezer burn. The bread can stay fresh for up to 2 weeks, but it's best to consume it soon. To toast from frozen, mist some water on the slice and toast it in a preheated oven.



Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions:

How can I get more guidance on making shokupan at home? >

What do you think of the *yudane (tangzhong)* method? >

**Can I knead the dough
with my hands? >**

**Does shokupan taste
like brioche? >**

Recipe Questions:

**How long does it take
for the dough to rise? >**

**How do I get the dough
to rise faster? >**

**Can I leave my dough
to rise overnight? >**

Troubleshooting Questions:

**Why is my dough not
rising? >**

**How do I keep my
dough from
overproofing in the
summertime? >**

Why does my loaf have a coarse crumb? >

What is the desired dough temperature (DDT) for shokupan? >

What do I do if my dough temperature is too high or too low? >

More Japanese Bread Recipes

If you love this Japanese milk bread, you're in for a treat with these other irresistible Japanese bread recipes.

- [Anpan](#)
- [Steamed Cake](#) (*Mushi-pan*)



4.85 FROM 225 VOTES



Japanese Milk Bread (Shokupan)



by [Namiko Hirasawa Chen](#)

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Japanese Milk Bread is possibly the best version of soft white bread! With a milky-sweet taste and pillowy softness, *shokupan* is enjoyed daily in Japan as breakfast toast and in sandwiches. Here's the perfect milk bread recipe in two styles: rounded top and flat top.

🕒 **Prep:** 1 hr

🕒 **Cook:** 30 mins

🕒 **Proof:** 2 hrs 5 mins

🕒 **Total:** 3 hrs 35 mins

Servings: 1 loaf

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Japanese Milk Bre...



Equipment

- [KitchenAid Stand Mixer \(Artisan Series\)](#), (with C-dough hook)
- [Rectangular Japanese Loaf Pan](#), (4.7 x 7.8 x 5.1 in. or 12 x 20 x 13 cm; 3100 ml; [read this post](#) on how to purchase it from Japan)

- Square Japanese Loaf Pan, (4.7 x 5.3 x 5.1 in. or 12 x 13.5 x 13 cm; 2070 ml; [read this post](#) on how to purchase it from Japan)
- [Digital Kitchen Scale](#)
- [Large bowl](#)
- [Dough scraper](#),
- [Dredge shaker](#)
- [Rolling Pin](#)
- [Mister](#)
- [Bread Loaf Bags](#)
- [plastic wrap](#)
- [kitchen towel](#)
- [wire rack](#)
- [small baking dishes](#)
- [dough hook attachment for stand mixer](#)
- [pastry brush](#)
- [paper towels](#)

**Cook Mode**

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Ingredients

1X

2X

3X

For 1 Rectangular
Shokupan Loaf (1.5
kin (斤) size)

- 250 g **warm water**
(104°F, 40°C; in the **summertime** when the kitchen is warm, use **room temp or cold water**; read about desired dough temperature in my blog post FAQs)
- 20 g **sugar**
- 7 g [Diamond Crystal kosher salt](#)
- 10 g **honey**
- 7 g [instant yeast](#) (I use 1 packet (7 g each) of [Fleischmann's®](#) bread machine yeast; use every last granule; DO NOT use old yeast that's more than 6 months old; **to substitute active dry yeast**, use the same amount or up to 25% more and proof it first in some of the warm water from above)
- 350 g **bread flour** (I use [King Arthur](#))
- 20 g **skim milk powder or nonfat dry milk powder** (I use [Bob's Red Mill](#); for vegan, use

coconut milk powder;

avoid soy milk powder as the dough does not rise well)

- 25 g **unsalted butter** (at room temperature; for vegan, use [Miyoko's](#))

For Greasing

- ½ tsp [neutral oil](#) (for the bowl)
- 10 g **unsalted butter** (at room temperature; for the pan; or use cooking oil spray)

For 1 Square Shokupan Loaf (1 *kin* (斤) size)

- 167 g **warm water**
- 14 g **sugar**
- 4.5 g [Diamond Crystal kosher salt](#)
- 7 g **honey**
- 4.7 g [instant yeast](#)
- 235 g **bread flour**
- 14 g **skim milk powder or nonfat dry milk powder**

17 g **unsalted butter**

Instructions

Before You Start

- 1 Shokupan Loaf Pans:**
The [rectangular loaf pan](#) is 4.7 x 7.8 x 5.1 in. (12 x 20 x 13 cm) and can hold approx 2900 ml.
The [square loaf pan](#) is 4.7 x 5.3 x 5.1 in. (12 x 13.5 x 13 cm) and can hold approx 1900 ml. I have written an [extensive post](#) about Japanese loaf pans and **how to order** them from Japan. If you're not particular about the size and shape, you can use [this 1 lb loaf pan](#) on Amazon and follow the recipe for the rectangular loaf.



2 **Stand Mixer:** Please note that my instructions below are for a [KitchenAid 5-QT Artisan Series stand mixer](#) (325 watts). If you're using a KitchenAid **Classic Series** mixer, do not double the recipe as the 275-watt motor is not strong enough. If you're using a KitchenAid **Professional Series** mixer with a **spiral hook**, you must double the rectangular loaf recipe to succeed, as there won't be enough dough to engage the hook otherwise. With twice the dough, you must knead 1.5 times longer at each step (as noted in the instructions). If you have a different brand of stand mixer, follow my steps the best you can to achieve a dough with the correct texture that passes the windowpane test (please see below for how to do this).



3 **Hand Kneading:** I hope [this video](#) is helpful for the kneading technique to use.

4 **Oven Rack:** Set the oven rack to a lower position where the top edge of your loaf pan is 6–7 inches (15–18 cm) away from the top heating element. This will allow enough space for the bread to rise during baking, especially for a round-topped loaf. Don't get closer than 6 inches or the top may brown too fast.

5 **To Create a Warm Environment for Bulk Fermentation:** If your oven has a Proof setting, turn it to 100°F (38°C). Otherwise, place small baking dishes of boiling water on the lower-middle rack at the four corners.

Then, place your dough in a bowl in the center of the rack and close the door. The steam and heat from the boiling water will create a warm environment for bulk fermentation. You can also proof bread dough with an Instant Pot using the Yogurt function on Low or the temperature setting. During the summer when humidity is high, you may not need to create a special environment.



To Make the Dough

- 1 Gather all the ingredients. Precise measurement is extremely important for this recipe; therefore, **please weigh your ingredients with a [digital kitchen scale](#)**. I

strongly discourage measuring by volume. Now, cut the butter into small cubes; I used a pair of kitchen shears. **For 1 rectangular loaf**, use **25 g unsalted butter**. (**For 1 square loaf**, use **17 g unsalted butter**.)



- 2 In a large bowl, combine the warm water, sugar, salt, and honey: **For 1 rectangular loaf**, combine **250 g warm water**, **20 g sugar**, **7 g Diamond Crystal kosher salt**, and **10 g honey**. (**For 1 square loaf**, combine **167 g warm water**, **14 g sugar**, **4.5 g Diamond Crystal kosher salt**, and **7 g honey**.) Mix well together. Then, add the yeast: **For 1 rectangular loaf**, add **7 g instant yeast**. (**For 1 square loaf**, add **4.7 g instant yeast**.) Whisk it all together and set aside

in a warm place for 10 minutes. You want to see bubbly foam on the surface. **Tip:** If you don't see any, maybe your yeast is old or the environment is not warm enough; wait another 5 minutes to see if any foamy bubbles develop.



- 3 Meanwhile, combine the bread flour and dry milk powder in a stand mixer bowl: **For 1 rectangular loaf**, combine **350 g bread flour** and **20 g skim milk powder or nonfat dry milk powder**. (**For 1 square loaf**, combine **235 g bread flour** and **14 g skim milk powder or nonfat dry milk powder**.) Mix it together. Make a well in the middle of the flour mixture.



- 4 Once you confirm the foamy surface on the yeast mixture, pour it into the well of the flour mixture, scraping out every bit of the liquid with a silicone spatula or dough scraper. Then, mix it until combined. Keep this yeast mixture bowl, as you'll put the dough ball in it later.



To Knead the Dough in the Stand Mixer

- 1 **Warning:** KitchenAid does not recommend kneading dough at settings higher than Speed 2. However, we can't achieve a perfect texture without kneading aggressively. **Hold your stand mixer down with your hand(s) when you're kneading at Speed 6, and keep an eye on the mixer at all**

times. Do not walk away. Don't take this warning lightly, as my instructor's mixer fell off the countertop onto the kitchen floor twice when she stepped away for just a few seconds. **Please use it at your own discretion.**

- 2 Set up the stand mixer with a dough hook attachment. Knead the dough on **Speed 2 for 2 minutes** (or **3 minutes for double** the rectangular loaf recipe). This is just to get started. The ingredients should be well combined after this step.



- 3 Next, increase the speed and knead the dough on **Speed 4 for 4 minutes** (or **6 minutes for double**). Now, stop the mixer. The dough will be smoother than before, yet

still a bit rough and bumpy.



- 4 Add the butter cubes to the dough. Knead again on **Speed 2 for 2 minutes (or 3 minutes for double)**, or until you no longer see any butter streaks.



- 5 Then, knead on **Speed 4 for 4 minutes (or 6 minutes for double)**. While spinning, the dough will stretch and elongate (see the photo below).



- 6 Stop the mixer and check the dough's texture. It should be smoother, shinier, softer, and thinner when it's stretched. At this stage, the dough is

still attached to the bottom of the mixer bowl.



- 7 Now, knead the dough on **Speed 6 for 3 minutes** (or **4½ minutes for double**). From here, you ***MUST hold down your stand mixer*** with your hand(s) since the machine will shake and move and may possibly fall off the countertop.



- 8 The dough will start to pull away from the bottom of the bowl and eventually become a solid ball shape. The mixer will shake and wobble as the dough bangs against the sides of the bowl. Again, ***hold your stand mixer*** to keep it from falling and ***monitor it at all times.***



- 9 Japanese milk bread requires aggressive kneading to get that soft, tender texture. The goal here is to develop the gluten (elasticity) by lengthening and stretching the gluten strands in the dough.



- 10 After kneading on Speed 6, stop the mixer. The dough should look really **shiny, silky, soft, and smooth** (not sticky). When you lift the dough hook, it should pick up all the dough in one piece, separating easily from the bottom of the bowl. **Tip:** If the dough becomes slack and gooey, you've kneaded the dough too long.



To Use the Windowpane Test

- 1 Now, it's time to try the **windowpane test**. Pull on a part of the dough or tear off a small piece. Hold the dough in both hands and gently pull it into a square with your fingers. It should be very elastic, smooth, and shiny. If it's strong enough to stretch to a super-thin membrane without tearing and light can pass through the center, your dough passes the test. If it doesn't stretch or it tears too easily, knead it again on Speed 6 for 2–3 minutes and test again.



- 2 To check the dough temperature, insert an instant-read thermometer into the center of the dough. **It should be 79–82°F (26–28°C)** and not lower or higher than this. Yeast is most active at 82–95°F (28–35°C) during bulk fermentation. **Tip:** If your dough temperature is higher than 82°F (28°C), let it **slowly rise** for the first rise (bulk fermentation) without using your oven's Proof setting (100°F/38°C) or placing it in a warm spot. This will help prevent overproofing.

To Slam and Fold

- 1 Once your dough passes the windowpane test, lightly dust the work surface and your hands with flour. Scrape the dough from the bowl onto the work surface with the silicone spatula or dough scraper. From this point,

make sure to **keep one smooth surface** on your dough ball at all times. My smooth surface is currently on the bottom of the dough.



- 2 Now, pick up the dough ball, keeping the smooth side up. Then, slam the smooth side onto the work surface. Bang!



- 3 Then, hold one edge of the dough with your fingers in the 12 o'clock position and fold it over to the opposite side at the 6 o'clock position, revealing the smooth surface. Now, pick up the dough with the smooth side up.



- 4 Once again, slam the smooth surface of the

dough onto the work surface. Bang! Now, pick up the edge of the dough at the 9 o'clock position and fold it over to the opposite side at the 3 o'clock position, revealing the smooth surface. Again, pick up the dough with the smooth side up.



- 5 Repeat this “slam and fold” process **5 times in total**. After you slam the dough for the final time, leave the dough on the work surface temporarily, and don't fold it over yet.



- 6 Take the bowl that you mixed the yeast in and thinly coat it with $\frac{1}{2}$ **tsp neutral oil**. Wipe off any excess oil from the bowl and your fingers with a paper towel.



- 7 Fold the dough over one last time. Pick it up and pull the edges from all sides to create a smooth, taut skin. Tuck and pinch the edges underneath to hide them at the bottom. Put the dough ball in the bowl and cover it with plastic.



The First Rise (Bulk Fermentation)

- 1 Place the bowl in a warm environment and let the dough rise for 40 minutes or until it triples in size. If you live in a cool climate, it may take longer (1–1½ hours). I use the Proof setting on my oven at 100°F (38°C). Please see the “Before You Start” section of the recipe for my proofing tips.



To Use the Finger Test

- 1 Once the dough has tripled in size, dust some flour on top and use your index finger to poke the middle of the dough. If the hole does not close up, it's ready. If the dough closes up immediately, proof the dough a little longer and test again.



To Deflate the Dough

- 1 Uncover and invert the bowl to release the dough onto your work surface. Using your fingers, gently press down and deflate the air bubbles in the dough. Remember to **keep one smooth surface** on your dough at all times. My smooth

surface is currently on the bottom of the dough.



- 2 Collect and press all the edges into the middle, flip the dough, and form a round shape, tucking any loose edges underneath.



To Divide the Dough

- 1 Using a kitchen scale, weigh the dough. Divide it with the dough scraper into 3 equal pieces for a rectangular shokupan loaf (or into 2 equal pieces for a square shokupan loaf).



- 2 If you have a piece that's bigger than the others, tear off some dough from the edge, keeping the smooth surface intact.

Attach it to the edge of a piece that's smaller than the others.



- 3 Form each piece into a ball with a **smooth, taut skin**: Hold the dough with the smooth surface on top and **gently pull and tighten the dough down from all sides** to create tension on the outside. We want all three dough balls to rise equally, so limit the pulling action to roughly the same for each ball, about 3–4 times total. Tuck and pinch the loose dough at the bottom. Place the dough on the work surface and repeat this process for the other pieces.

Alternatively, you can place the dough on a non-floured surface. Place both of your hands behind the dough and **drag it along the work**

surface toward your body. The bottom of the dough sticks to the dry surface, creating tension and tightening the ball. Keep the dough ball upright and don't allow the top of the dough to roll over as you pull ([see this video](#)). Rotate the ball a quarter turn and perform another gentle drag toward your body. Continue rotating and dragging a few more times until the dough is sufficiently taut and uniformly round.



The Bench Rest

- 1 Cover the dough balls with a damp towel and rest them for 15 minutes.



- 2 Meanwhile, use a pastry brush to grease the pan

and the lid (if you're making flat-topped shokupan) with a thin coating of **10 g unsalted butter**. **Tip:** I like the taste of butter on the crust, but you can use cooking oil spray instead, if you prefer.



To Shape the Dough into a Rectangle

- 1 After 15 minutes, take out one dough ball, keeping the rest under the damp towel. Gently handle the dough without stressing it. **Dust just enough flour so your dough does not stick to the work surface and rolling pin, but not so much that your dough slides around.** As you practice, you will know how much flour is just enough. Next, place the rolling pin in the middle of

the dough and press it down.



- 2 First, roll out the dough away from you all the way through the top edge. Rolling releases gas in the dough. Next, roll out the dough toward you all the way through the edge closest to you. **Tip:** If the dough slides around, you dusted too much flour. I love using a [nonstick rolling pin](#); you can buy a [similar one](#) from Amazon.



- 3 Pick up the dough and flip it over, and then rotate it 90 degrees so it's laid out in front of you in a horizontal oval shape.



- 4 Roll the four corners of the dough to shape the oval into a rectangle. Place the rolling pin in the middle.



- 5 Roll out the dough away from you and then toward you, rolling through all the edges.



- 6 Next, roll out the upper two corners, so they are squared rather than rounded.



- 7 Then, roll out the lower two corners. The dough will now be a vertical rectangle.



8 Make sure the dough is an even thickness from the edges to the center. Use the heel of your hand around the edges to flatten the thick parts or pop the air bubbles. The rectangle will measure roughly 21 x 26 cm (8 x 10 in.). **Tip:** I noticed from my own experience that if I don't roll out the dough evenly at this stage, it affects the shape when I roll up the dough later.



To Make the Dough Rolls

1 Fold the dough in thirds lengthwise. First, bring the right third of the dough to the left one-third line, lightly and gently pressing the edge down so it stays in place. Next, fold the left third of the dough, overlapping the right third

by two-thirds. The edge of the left third should be slightly past the center line. **Tip:** If the dough sticks to the work surface, detach it gently; do not pull it, or the dough's surface will not be smooth. Always handle your dough gently with care and do not stress the dough.



- 2 Press down and seal this edge with your fingers, from top to bottom. At this stage, the folded dough should have an even thickness. Both the right and left horizontal edges are thicker (puffed up), but the overlapped edges near the center even out the thickness of the dough.



- 3 Fold down the two upper corners toward the center line, so the top now looks like a triangle tip. Then, tuck the tip down toward you, making sure it is right in the middle.



- 4 Start rolling the dough **slowly** toward you, gently pulling the dough downward as you roll to create a **smooth and taut skin**, but don't roll too tightly. **Tip:** Use the same amount of tension when making all of your dough rolls. This helps them rise at the same rate during the final proof and for an ideal round-topped shokupan shape.



- 5 Keep rolling all the way to the end, making sure the shape of the roll is even. Now, pinch the dough

edge to seal. Place the rolled-up dough under the damp towel and repeat rolling up the rest of the dough balls. **Remember which piece of dough you rolled last.**



To Fill the Shokupan Mold

- 1 Now, place the dough rolls in the greased shokupan mold, starting with the first two pieces you rolled. Place the first dough roll, seam side down, on one side of the mold. Make sure that 1) the seam is on the bottom, 2) the direction of the swirl goes toward (not away from) the middle of the pan, and 3) the roll's side touches the pan's side.



- 2 Now, place the second dough roll on the opposite end of the mold, seam side down. Again, the direction of the swirl should go toward the loaf's center.



- 3 Finally, place the last piece of dough you rolled between the first two, seam side down. The direction of the swirl can go either way. Gently press down on the tops of the dough rolls to make them the same height.



- 4 If you are using the square shokupan loaf pan, the two rolls should go in just like the first two rolls for the rectangular loaf pan, swirled toward the center.



The Final Rise (Proofing) and Oven Preheat

- 1 Cover the mold with plastic and place in a warm environment for 1 hour or until the dough has risen to 80–90% of the height of the mold, depending on which shape of loaf you're making (see the next step). **Tip:** For the first 30 minutes, I use the Proof mode of my oven. I then place the mold in a warm area of my house to finish proofing.

When you have 30 minutes of proofing time left, start preheating the oven to **425°F (220°C)**. For a convection oven, reduce the baking temperature by 25°F

(15°C). **Tip:** My oven usually preheats in 15 minutes; however, it is very important that the oven is thoroughly preheated, so I plan 30 minutes of preheating time.



- 2 To make a flat-topped shokupan (角型食パン),** let the dough rise to 75–80% of the height of the mold. Then, remove the plastic and close the lid. If your proof was a bit too long and you exceed 80%, change to a round-topped shokupan. **Tip:** Don't force the lid closed over the dough. Even if the lid closes, the dough will continue to rise in the oven and the lid will get stuck.



- 3 To make a round-topped shokupan (山型食パン),** let the dough rise to 85–90% of the height of the mold. When the highest point of the dough touches the plastic wrap, it's ready to bake. Now, remove the plastic and spritz the surface of the dough with water.
- Note:** The volume for each shokupan mold is very different. My 90% may not be the same as yours if we use a different mold.



To Bake the Shokupan

- 1 For the flat-topped shokupan,** lower the oven temperature to **415°F (210°C)** and bake for 25–30 minutes (in my oven, it's 28 minutes).
- For the round-topped shokupan,** lower the

oven temperature to **385°F (195°C)** and bake for 30 minutes. For a convection oven, reduce the baking temperature by 25°F (15°C). **For a square loaf**, the baking temperature and time should be the same or slightly less.



- 2 If you bake two loaves at the same time, bake 1–2 minutes longer and make sure to have plenty of **space between the pans** so the heat can circulate. **Tip:** If the loaf comes out lighter in color, you may also want to increase the oven temperature by 5°F (2–3°C) next time. **To bake both the flat-topped and the round-topped shokupan together**, bake at **400°F (200°C)**.

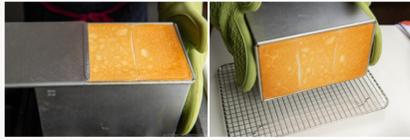


3 When it's done baking, drop the mold firmly 1–2 times on the work surface (I use a stovetop grate) to allow the water vapors to escape from the bread. This keeps the shokupan from shrinking. **Tip:** If water vapor remains in the bread, it will weaken the bread's structure and make it easier to deflate. The sides of the loaf will wilt and bend as well.



4 **For the flat-topped shokupan**, open the lid carefully. If you struggle to remove the lid, close it and drop the shokupan mold on the work surface one more time. If you still can't open it, note that you need to stop the second proof earlier next

time. Maybe instead of 80%, try 75%.



- 5 Give a few thrusts and slide the shokupan out of the mold onto a wire cooling rack. After baking, do not wash your Japanese shokupan loaf pan. Simply wipe it off with a paper towel and store it completely dry to prevent rust.



To Serve

- 1 Let the shokupan cool **completely** on the wire rack; it may take 2–3 hours. Do not cut or open the loaf while it's hot; the steam will escape and the bread will lose moisture. Slice the cooled bread and toast it to enjoy with butter and jam/honey or use untoasted slices for

Japanese-style sandwiches.



To Store

- 1 If you plan to eat the shokupan within 1 to 2 days, put the whole loaf, completely cooled, in a bag (I use [clear plastic bags](#)) and slice as needed. If you don't plan to eat the shokupan within 2 days, slice and freeze the rest. It's freshest within the first two weeks, but you can freeze it for up to a month.



Nutrition

Serving: 1.5kin, **Calories:** 1645kcal,
Carbohydrates: 295g, **Protein:** 52g,
Fat: 27g, **Saturated Fat:** 14g,

Polyunsaturated Fat: 3g,
Monounsaturated Fat: 6g,
Trans Fat: 1g, **Cholesterol:** 58mg,
Sodium: 1355mg, **Potassium:** 786mg
 , **Fiber:** 10g, **Sugar:** 40g,
Vitamin A: 1068IU, **Vitamin C:** 1mg,
Calcium: 348mg, **Iron:** 3mg

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 recipe?**

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Editor's Note: This post was
 originally published on June 1, 2022.
 It was republished with more helpful
 information on December 20, 2024.

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About Namiko Hirasawa a Chen

Born and raised in Japan, I'm the founder and recipe developer behind Just One Cookbook, the largest English-language website for authentic Japanese

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LORELEI SENSABAUGH

Made this recipe for the second time, this time using the recommended pan and it turned out beautifully.



4d Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hi Lorelei! Aww. We are so happy to hear your Shokupan turned out beautifully!

Thank you for trying Nami's recipe and for your kind feedback. Happy baking!

3d Reply

SHAINA

Hi! I have looked at many shokupan recipes and this is the only one I've seen that doesn't use Tangzhong. I am curious if you have found a difference or if there is a reason why you chose to make without. I am baking this tonight and am excited to see the results!



September 19, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hi Shaina! Thank you for giving Nami's recipe a try! We hope you enjoyed it. Nami explains her thoughts and the reasons in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the post. We hope you find it helpful and enjoy reading it. Happy baking!

September 20, 2025 Reply

ADRIANA

Can you use full fat milk powder?



September 15, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hi Adriana! Thank you so much for trying Nami's recipe!

We haven't tested this recipe with full-fat milk powder, but since it has a higher fat content, the bread texture may turn out a little different. If you do give it a try, we'd love to hear how it goes!

September 17, 2025 Reply

HUNG NGUYEN

Hi!

I went to Asai Shoten but accidentally bought the 2 kins flat top. I am wondering if there is any adjustments in ingredients.

Please let me know.

Thank you,
Hung Nguyen

September 10, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hi Hung! Thank you for trying Nami's recipe! We haven't tried it on a 2-kin flat top before, but doubling the 1-kin version should work just fine. We'd love to hear how it turns out if you give it a try! Happy baking!

September 11, 2025 Reply

SARAH

Has anyone made this with freshly-milled flour? I just got a mill. The resulting flour isn't quite as fine as store-bought bread flour. I really want to try it but don't want to waste the flour. 😊



September 7, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hi Sarah! Thank you for trying Nami's recipe! We haven't heard of anyone using freshly-milled flour yet, but it sounds exciting! If you give it a try, we'd love to hear how it turns out. Happy baking!

September 11, 2025 Reply

VALERIE

Oh. My. Gosh.

I can't believe how good this turned out on my first try!! I'm not a regular baker (though I want to be). Her recipe along with the video is so detailed that even someone with very little practice like me can follow along

and get great results! I bought the 1.5kiln Japanese pans from Amazon and followed her instructions for seasoning and it was great! I baked for a the shortest time recommended (25min) since I know my pan is smaller.

I want to know though, when doing a double batch, which I plan to do next, when do you split it? After kneading or when you make the rolls do you just divide into 6 even parts instead of three? Or is there some other step when you split it?



August 27, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hi Valerie! Thank you so much for trying Nami's recipe and for your lovely feedback. Your experiences will definitely help anyone new to bread-making feel confident. Thank you for inspiring other readers! To double the recipe, you can simply divide the dough into smaller balls

as usual. We hope this helps! Happy baking!

August 30, 2025 Reply

BIANCA

Can you use this in a dough machine (its like a bread machine but without the cooking portion) with the same results?

August 17, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hi Bianca! Thank you for reading Nami's post and giving her recipe a try! We haven't tested it ourselves, but it should give a similar texture. We'd love to hear how it turns out if you give it a try!

August 18, 2025 Reply

NIKKI BATES

I've been making this bread for over a year and just now getting to eating this recipe! My mom is from Nagano and I have tried different recipes and

this by far is the best one! Thank you for giving me a recipe I can pass down! I've made well over 50 loafs in the last year ❤️



August 15, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hello, Nikki! Wow, over 50 loaves! 🥰 That's incredible!

Thank you so much for trying Nami's recipe and sharing your experience with us. Your enthusiasm truly made our day! ❤️

August 18, 2025 Reply

ASHLEY HANNAH

I've been baking this bread for a few years now and absolutely love it, however yesterday when I baked the crust split away from the loaf creating a hole.

Any ideas on what I did wrong ?



August 6, 2025 Reply

**NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY
MANAGER)**

Hi Ashley! Thank you for trying Nami's recipe and sharing your baking experience with us. It sounds like your dough may have been over-proofed, which can create holes. In warmer weather, using warm water can sometimes be too much compared to cooler seasons, so using slightly cooler water might help. We hope this tip solves the issue for you next time!

August 10, 2025 Reply

NATALIE KING

Just the most amazing recipe, easy to follow despite lots of steps, the photos are really helpful and it makes the most beautiful bread!



August 2, 2025 Reply

**NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY
MANAGER)**

Hi Natalie! Aww. Thank you so much for your kind feedback! It made our day!

We hope you'll continue to enjoy Nami's recipes and cooking. Happy cooking!

August 2, 2025 Reply

JAIME HARDWICK

I've made this recipe three times and it turned out absolutely perfectly.



July 29, 2025 Reply

NAOMI (JOC COMMUNITY MANAGER)

Hello, Jaime! Thank you so much for trying Nami's recipe and for your kind feedback!

We are glad to hear you enjoyed it! Happy baking!

July 31, 2025 Reply

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