

Baking in a bag

DUTCH CONSUMERS CAN NOW BUY SLICED, PAR-BAKED BREADS IN A BAG AND BAKE THEM OFF AT HOME IN THE SAME BAG



++ figure 1
Sliced bread in a bag ready to bake-off



++ figure 2
When putting the frozen loaf into the oven, the air inside the bag heats up, the moisture is released and the pressure inside the bag inside prevents the evaporation of water from the loaf

On the shelves of Albert Heijn supermarkets in the Netherlands you will find sliced bread in bags. This is nothing new, but what is new is that the bread can be baked-off at home while still in the bag. The Dutch company producing and supplying bread packaging has called this bag “thermo bag”. The bags can serve as sales packagings, for bake-off or even for the initial baking of breads.

René Peters, general manager of the bag producer Peters Verpakking in Alkmaar, Netherlands, compares the bag with a roasting bag which has been used by consumers in their kitchen at home for quite some time now. Peters describes what happens inside the bake-off bag: “When placing a pre-proofed, frozen dough piece within the bag into a cold oven and setting the oven’s temperature to 180 °C, the dough will thaw within the first 15 minutes. The air inside the bag then heats up, moisture is released and inside the bag a proofing atmosphere builds up. The temperature of the air inside the bag is higher than the core temperature of the dough piece because this is thawing slowly. Therefore, the dough piece can still proof. The pressure inside the bag prevents the evaporation of water from the dough. Upon reaching a temperature equilibrium, the crust and color of the bread develop.

The only prerequisite is that the bread surface has some cuts so that the tension in the dough can be released, thus avoiding the formation of cracks.”

According to Peters, bread loaves par-baked to 90 % without hard crust can be baked-off in the bag as whole loaves but also as slices within 10 minutes at an oven temperature of 190 °C. For more crusty products such as Kaiser rolls or baguettes, the bags are micro-perforated. Already this method is used in the Netherlands by several bakeries.

The film from which the bags are produced is a 19 µm polyester material which is hard to seal. This is the reason why the bags are delivered as bags and can not be made in a forming, filling and sealing machine in the bakery. In general, the bag is closed by a clip. Polyester is an excellent temperature transfer medium for high and low temperatures. At the German Institute of Human Nutrition in Bergholz-Rehbrücke, trials are currently under way to cool down baked goods by vacuum enthalpy refrigeration for prolonged shelf life. In the first trials, par-baked rolls stored at a temperature of 7 °C have achieved a shelf life of four weeks. Further trials are already scheduled.

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