



In February 2021, after Lucia DeClerck, a 105-year-old New Jersey woman, credited surviving COVID-19 to "prayer, avoiding junk food and eating gin-soaked raisins", the latter has become all the rage. I heard that golden raisins are the best to soak, so I bought a whole pound and soaked them in my favorite gin, Death's Door from a small distillery in Door County, Wisconsin. I ended up with way too many, so what to do?

What could be better use of my surplus than in an Irish soda bread for St. Patrick's Day? This recipe has all my favorites in one loaf. The egg and the baking soda work together to help the loaf rise quite a bit, so make sure you put on a big baking sheet or in a big enough pan. The alcohol vanishes during baking... so the end result is alcohol-free.

Pre-soak organic golden raisins in a good gin for about a week. Then, they are ready to go. I soaked a whole pound which gave me plenty to scoop out a cup for this recipe... and lots more to nibble on.

2 cups stone-ground whole-wheat flour (I use Bob's Red Mill)

1 cup unbleached white all-purpose flour

½ cup wheat germ

½ tsp. salt

1 tsp. baking soda

¼ cup butter

1 cup gin-soaked golden raisins

1 egg

1 to 1¼ buttermilk, enough to moisten

Add the salt and baking soda to the flours and wheat germ in a medium-sized bowl and mix

together. Cut the butter into the flour mixture with a pastry cutter until grainy. Add the raisins to the flour mixture and stir to coat.

Add the egg to 1 cup buttermilk and stir with a fork or whisk to incorporate. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and pour in the wet ingredients. With a circular motion, stir and fold the ingredients together, but do not over stir. Add more buttermilk as needed to just moisten all the dry ingredients.

Quickly shape into a small round loaf and cut a cross (about ¼-inch deep) in the top of the loaf. Place on a parchment-line cookie sheet or in the center of 10-inch pie tin and bake at 375°F for 45 minutes during which time the loaf will double in size. Cool on a rack as long as you stand not breaking into it (preferably overnight) before cutting.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucelee/2021/02/27/105-year-old-recovered-from-covid-19-her-tip-eating-gin-soaked-raisins/?sh=7129152ee551>