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MUESLI SODA BREAD

In honor of St. Patrick's Day, I am sharing with you one of most prized, heretofore secret, recipes. About ten years ago, I met a woman on a flight back to the United States from Ireland. We chatted about Irish soda bread, and she recited one of her favorite recipes from memory. Made with muesli, it has become one of my favorites, too. I use Bob's Red Mill muesli. If you are lucky enough to have a source of raw milk, measure out the required amount and set it in a warm place overnight to sour. The reason you need to sour the milk is to produce enough lactic acid to react with the alkaline baking soda, which produces carbon dioxide gas to raise the bread.

- 3 cups spelt flour, sprouted spelt flour,
- or 2¾ cups whole wheat flour
- 2 cups muesli
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 egg
- 1½ cups buttermilk,
- soured raw milk, or yogurt

Measure out the flour, muesli, and baking soda in a medium-to-large bowl. Cut the butter into small pieces and then pinch them into smaller pieces working them into the flour with your fingers until you obtain a grainy texture. Add the egg to the buttermilk and lightly beat to incorporate. Pour the milk/egg mixture into the dry ingredients and mix to make a thick, yet moist, dough. Be ready to add a little more buttermilk, soured milk, or yogurt if necessary.

Turn the dough out on a floured piece of parchment paper and shape into a round loaf. Move the loaf to a parchment-lined baking sheet and cut a cross in the top of the dough. Bake at 375°F for 1 hour, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool overnight and serve for breakfast with lots of butter and jam.