

ACCENT

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ASK THE SPLENDID TABLE

Price of extra-virgin olive oil is worth cost

By LYNNE ROSSETTO KASPER
SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

Dear Lynne: If the olive-oil label says "pure," do I have to worry whether it is a virgin or an extra-virgin? The savings are hefty, and I don't want to pry into the olive's private life.

Kidding aside, is there truly a difference?

— **Doubting Donna in the Olive-Oil Aisle**

Dear Donna: First of all, "pure" oils aren't so pure. All the good things you buy olive oil for — nutrients, lack of trans fats and flavor — are captured in the oil only if you press olives right after picking using no heat or chemicals.

This is where "virgin" comes in. That term on the label means that the olives were pressed sans heat and what the trade calls solvents, or chemicals. Here is what the olive-oil titles mean.

- **"Extra-virgin"** contains less than 1 percent acidity, which makes it easy to digest, among other things. Extra-virgin is the purest expression of the olive in all its nutritional and sensual glory.

When spending the hefty prices demanded for premium extra-virgins, make sure they have a harvest ("recolta" in Italian) date that is less than one year back. Flavors fade after a year.

- **"Virgin"** olive oil can contain up to 4 percent acidity. You rarely see this oil, which is just as well.

- **"Pure," "Pomace" or simply "Olive Oil"** on the label indicate oils treated with chemicals and, in most cases, heat. These do not belong in anyone's kitchen. You lose nutrients and flavor.

- **"Light"** is a marketing gimmick. Many think it means less calories. It does not. It means the oil is heavily filtered to remove flavor and color.

Try one of these reasonably priced extra-virgin olive oils: Bella, Carapelli, Cost Plus, Crespi, Costco Kirkland's Toscano and Whole Foods 365.

All olive oils aren't equal in quality. Buy extra-virgin varieties for the best flavor and nutrients.

METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

GO ON, MAKE SOME DOUGH

For those who have never tried it, baking bread isn't as hard as it sounds. Just follow six easy rules.

1. The water you use to "proof" the yeast, or make sure it's alive, should be between 105 and 115 degrees. To do that, use a fast-read kitchen thermometer, available at kitchen and discount stores.

If the water is less than 105 degrees, you won't know if it's alive. If the water is hotter than 115 degrees, you will kill the yeast and your bread will be fit only for construction purposes.

After feeding your yeast with a little sugar to get it growing, you'll know it's alive and doing well when it forms a thick foam on its surface that will cling to your finger.

2. After mixing the dough, add additional flour a little at a time, sprinkling a bit onto the board or counter on which you're kneading the bread, rather than on the bread itself, which can form clumps.

"If the dough is sticking to the board or to your hands, you need to add more flour," baker David Green said.



Hands are the best tools for mixing dough to bake bread. Dough needs to be roughed up, says baker David Green.

3. Don't fear the dough. Knead it strongly for six or seven minutes until it begins to feel silky, elastic and plump, a bit like a firm but fluffy down pillow.

"You basically cannot overknead. Kneading strengthens the walls of the gluten, which holds in the gas," Green said. "You shouldn't be too gentle with it."

4. The rising process can't be cut short. The dough must rise twice until doubled in size, once in the bowl after kneading and once in the baking pan after it's been punched down and rolled out. The process takes about an hour for each rising.



Bread dough, having risen once, is pressed back down into the bowl. It must rise twice before baking.

5. Don't show the once-risen bread any mercy. As lovely as it looks, all voluptuous and silky, you must punch it down flat before rolling it out and sticking it in its pan. Have faith, it will rise again.

6. Take the bread out of the pan to cool after baking, or moisture will condense inside the pan around the loaf and give your bread a soggy bottom.



SCRIPPS HOWARD PHOTOS

Don't be such a pessimist. You can bake a loaf of bread as pretty as this one, churned out by David Green of Sweetie

Sweetie bakery in suburban Pittsburgh. The few ingredients are cheap, and each step takes only a few minutes at a time.

Just loaf around this weekend

By AMY MCCONNELL SCHAARSMITH
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Bake homemade bread? Sure, you're thinking. "Please. Who could possibly have time for that?"

You do, if you're going to be home for a few hours over the weekend.

While the entire process of baking bread takes a few hours, the individual steps are simple and take only a few minutes. There's plenty of time between steps to do something else, whether that's vacuuming or reading a book.

The ingredients — yeast, water, sugar, milk, salt, butter and flour — are cheap, and you probably have most of them in your pantry.

Baking bread can be a therapeutic break that slows your



Finished bread dough is put into pans. Then it must rise again.

thoughts, relaxes your mind and puts you in touch with a part of you that existed before meetings, schedules and too many family duties.

"It's meditative," said baker David Green of Sweetie bakery in suburban Pittsburgh. "It takes you back to the earth."

Best of all, baking bread gives you a steamy, buttery loaf so delicious, so luscious, so simply decadent that it will top any bread you've ever bought at a store, guaranteed.

No, we're not joking: Baking homemade bread *won't* take all day and *will* be relaxing

STEP BY STEP: Grandma's white bread

2 packages dry yeast
¾ cup warm water (105 to 115 degrees)
2 tablespoons sugar
1¼ cups milk
¼ cup butter (unsalted)
1 tablespoon salt
5 cups bread flour (approximately)
Melted butter

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add sugar. Let set for three min-

utes until foam covers surface. Heat milk, butter and salt to 110 degrees and add to yeast mixture.

Add half the flour and mix with a wooden spoon or heavy whisk for two minutes.

Add remaining flour and work in with hands until a ball forms. Turn out onto a floured surface and begin kneading. If dough is too sticky, add small amounts of flour.

Knead for six minutes or until dough is smooth and elastic.

Lightly coat with oil and return to bowl. Cover with a towel and let rise for one hour or until doubled in bulk.

Punch down and form into a large rectangle. Cut in half and roll each half into a loaf.

Place seam side down in greased pans. Loosely cover with plastic wrap and set in a

warm place and allow to rise for 1 hour.

Gently remove plastic wrap. Cut a slit down center of the loaf with a sharp knife.

Brush with melted butter and bake in a preheated 375-degree oven for about 30 minutes or until loaf gives off a hollow sound when tapped.

Remove from pans and allow to cool on a rack to ensure a crisp crust.

Scott Roddy, an Indian Creek High School graduate, begins his duties as music director and afternoon radio personality at 97.1 Hank FM on Monday. Roddy has worked in radio since he was a teenager, first in central Indiana and later in Florida.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DANA SHEPHERD

Radio junkie happy he's gone country again

Far southside native picks songs you'll hopefully like to hear

By PAUL HOFFMAN
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Scott Roddy's career has come full circle in many ways.

The 1993 Indian Creek High School graduate got his start in radio as a teenager, spinning records and talking to listeners in central Indiana. After a short break from the business last year, Roddy is back on the local airwaves.

For the past six months, Roddy was the afternoon personality at Gold 95.9 WIAU-FM, an oldies station based in Franklin.

Next week, however, he goes back to his roots and returns to the country music he played when he first got into

radio. At 97.1 Hank FM, Roddy will be the station's music director and afternoon personality.

"I love country music," he said. "I grew up playing it."

The 30-year-old Roddy's first real radio gig was at Martinsville's WCBK, a country station.

"A lot of our (Hank's) music is from the late '80s and early '90s, music from that era," he said. "And I played that when it was new."

As music director, the radio personality formerly known as "Records" decides which songs to add to Hank's play list.

"The new songs will have to match the character of Hank, what he would have in his personal CD collection," Roddy said.

So who is Hank?

"He's the radio station," Roddy said. "He's the guy sitting at the bar next to you telling you jokes. He's the guy

who cheers on IU, a local guy who has a pickup truck. He goes to Cordry Lake and likes cookouts and frothy beverages."

Many of the same people who have been fans of Roddy's during his past two radio jobs, both with oldies stations, could very well be fans of his at Hank.

"The core (audience) is almost the same as oldies, except it stretches into a younger (age group)," he said.

Roddy got radio experience at age 14 by calling in basketball and football scores to WCBK in Martinsville. That gig ended when he used incorrect football terminology.

"I said somebody intercepted a punt," he recalled. "You don't intercept punts."

After some late-night and very early morning radio stints at WCBK and then Kiss 99, he worked weekends and then evenings at WINN, a top-40 station in Columbus,

as a senior in high school.

From there, he worked WFMS "The Bear" in Indy and did country western and top 40 in Florida for a few years. When he came back to Indy, he hooked up with WGLD 104.5 FM, one of the top oldies stations in the nation for several years.

When the station switched to Jack FM, Roddy was fired along with the other on-air staff.

He had always told himself if he wasn't able to do radio, he'd fly. So he did, as a flight attendant. While he loves to travel, the rigors of the job and the pay didn't agree with him.

Roddy started getting calls from Indy radio stations less than six months into his flight gig. He ended up taking the afternoon slot at Gold 95.9 in Franklin and loved it there.

But the opportunity to advance his career as a music director, plus the chance to do country again, was too good to pass up, he said.