

CAJUN CRACKLING BREAD

(Yield: 2 loaves)

2 envelopes active dry yeast

1/2 cup lukewarm water (105°F)

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup milk, scalded and cooled to lukewarm (105°F)

4 eggs

5 to 5-1/2 cups bread flour

1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened

2 cups cracklings

1 egg beaten with

1 tablespoon milk

Grease a large bowl; set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in water with sugar; let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. Add salt, milk, eggs, and 3 cups flour to dissolved yeast; beat until smooth. Add butter, beating until well blended. Stir in enough remaining flour to make a soft dough. Turn out onto well floured board; knead briefly. Press out into a flat disc. Sprinkle 1 cup crackling over dough; fold dough over. Knead in cracklings. Press out again; add remaining cracklings. Fold dough over and knead 8 to 10 minutes until smooth and elastic. Place in prepared bowl; grease top lightly. Cover; let rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Spray 2 8x4-inch loaf pans with non-stick vegetable spray.

Punch dough down; knead briefly. Divide dough in half; shape into loaves. Place in prepared loaf pans; grease tops lightly. Cover; let rise until doubled, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Brush tops of loaves with egg mixture. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until loaves are golden brown and sound hollow when lightly tapped. Remove from pans; cool completely on a wire rack.