

## 5.4: Using Yeast in Baking

Many bakers add compressed yeast directly to their dough. A more traditional way to use yeast is to dissolve it in lukewarm water before adding it to the dough. The water should never be higher than 50°C (122°F) because heat destroys yeast cells. In general, salt should not come into direct contact with yeast, as salt dehydrates the yeast. (Table 1 indicates the reaction of yeast at various temperatures.)

It is best to add the dissolved yeast to the flour when the dough is ready for mixing. In this way, the flour is used as a buffer. (Buffers are ingredients that separate or insulate ingredients, which if in too close contact, might start to react prematurely.) In sponges where little or no salt is used, yeast buds quickly and fermentation of the sponge is rapid.

Table 1 How yeast reacts at different temperatures

Temperature	Reaction
15°C -20°C (60°F -68°F)	slow reaction
26°C -29°C (80°F -85°F)	normal reaction
32°C -38°C (90°F -100°F)	fast reaction
59°C (138°F)	terminal death point

Never leave compressed yeast out for more than a few minutes. Remove only the amount needed from the refrigerator. Yeast lying around on workbenches at room temperature quickly deteriorates and gives poor results. One solution used by some bakeries to eliminate steps to the fridge is to have a small portable cooler in which to keep the yeast on the bench until it is needed. Yeast must be kept wrapped at all times because if it is exposed to air the edges and the corners will turn brown. This condition is known as air- burn.

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