

McDougalls Harvest Festival Wheatsheaf

A simple, step-by-step guide to making a traditional Harvest Festival Wheatsheaf using **McDougalls White Bread & Roll Mix**. Perfect for classroom baking activities or as a seasonal centrepiece.

Ingredients (*Makes 1 large wheatsheaf*)

- 1 kg McDougalls White Bread & Roll Mix, plus extra for dusting
- 725 ml warm water (approx. 30°C)
- 1 egg for glazing
- Optional: pumpkin, sunflower or poppy seeds for decoration

Method

1. Place the bread mix into a large mixing bowl.
2. Add the warm water (30°C).
3. Mix with a dough hook (slow speed for 1 min, then medium for 6 minutes) or knead 4 by hand for 8–10 minutes until smooth.
4. Divide the dough into three equal pieces.

Creating the Base:

5. Lightly dust your work surface with flour.
6. Take one piece of dough, roll it into a rectangle to fit your baking tray.
7. Cut a large mushroom shape with a long stalk from the dough.
8. Gather the off-cuts, roll into a ball, and set aside.
9. Transfer the mushroom shape to your baking tray.
10. Brush the dough surface with water.

Making the Wheat Stalks:

11. Take the second dough piece and divide it into 30 equal parts.
12. Roll each into a 23cm (9") rope.
13. Lay these evenly along the mushroom stem to resemble wheat stalks.

Making the Ears of Wheat:

14. Divide the third dough piece into three.
15. Roll each into a long thin cylinder, then cut each into 20 small pieces.
16. Press the ends of each piece onto the top round section of the mushroom shape, working from the outside in.
17. Snip the ends of each piece several times with scissors to resemble grains in an ear of wheat.

Adding the Finishing Touches:

18. Take your dough off-cuts and divide into three pieces.
19. Roll each into a 25cm (10") rope.
20. Plait the ropes together.
21. Brush the middle of the stalks with water and place the plait over them to create the look of tied string.
22. Optional: Use leftover dough to make a small mouse. Brush the underside with water and place it on the wheatsheaf.

Baking:

23. Beat the egg and brush the entire wheatsheaf for a glossy finish.
24. Bake at 200°C (Fan 180°C), Gas Mark 6 for 25–30 minutes, or until golden brown.

Preserving the Wheatsheaf

To use the wheatsheaf as a decorative display:

- Lower the oven temperature to **140°C (Fan 120°C, Gas Mark 1)**.
- Bake for an additional **3–5 hours** to thoroughly dry out the dough.
- Allow to cool completely.
- For longevity, brush with clear varnish once fully cooled.