

Making Bread with My Grandmother – by Leslie Ann Bent

I can visualize my 5-year-old self standing at the table in my grandmother's kitchen. There is a large bread bowl before me and my grandmother is teaching me how to knead the dough. I am grinning ear to ear. I am responsible for helping her this week in May, 1971.

“Give it another good old punch,” she instructs. I do just as she says. “A few more ought to do it. That looks good,” she encourages. I concentrate on kneading this stretchy mass that feels good under my small fingers and give it another jab. When I'm done, I just smile. There is nothing more special than baking with Grammie in her large country kitchen. She is at home there - efficient and calm. She is standing at the counter in her faded printed cotton dress and apron. She watches me knead with one eye while she is chopping vegetables. She dusts some flour over the bread. We cover it to let it rise again. She gives me her nod of approval. I wish I had the memory of scent of yeasty dough on that day or the fresh baked bread - the reward for our labour but I don't. *Baking with Grammie* is a given. Not having to *share* the kitchen with my cousins or aunts is a rare treat.

Nearly 50 years later, I still think of my first breadmaking lesson each time I bake bread. I can't help but smile at this treasured memory of us together.

