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Rye Bread

For the sponge:

- 2 Tsp rye bread flavor (optional)
- 2 3/4 Cups water, at room temperature
- 1 1/2 Tsp instant yeast
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 3 Cups (15 oz) all-purpose flour

For the dough:

- 1 1/2 Cups (7 1/2 oz) all-purpose flour
- 3 1/2 Cups rye flour
- 2 Tbsp caraway seeds
- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp table salt
- Cornmeal for sprinkling on the baking sheet

For the glaze:

- 1 Egg white
- 1 Tbsp milk

- 1) Heat oven to 350 degrees F; Mix water, yeast, honey, rye bread improver, and flour in the large mixing bowl of a heavy-duty mixer to form a thick batter. Cover with plastic wrap, and let sit until bubbles form over entire surface, at least 2 1/2 hours. (Can stand at room temperature overnight.)
- 2) Add all-purpose flour, 3 1/4 cups rye flour, caraway seeds, oil, and salt into the sponge. Stir to combine. With machine fitted with dough hook and set on speed 2, knead dough, adding the remaining 1/4 cup rye flour once the dough becomes cohesive; knead until smooth yet sticky, about 5 minutes. With moistened hands, transfer dough to a well-floured counter, knead it into a smooth ball, then place in a lightly greased bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise at warm room temperature until doubled in size, 1 1/4 to 2 hours.
- 3) Generously sprinkle cornmeal on a large baking sheet. Turn dough onto a lightly floured work surface and press dough into 12x9-inch rectangle. (For 2 smaller loaves, halve the dough, pressing each portion into a 9x6 1/2-inch rectangle.) With one of the long sides facing you, roll dough into a 12-inch (or 9-inch) log, seam side up. Pinch seam with fingertips to seal. Turn dough seam side down, and with fingertips, seal ends by tucking dough into the loaf. Carefully transfer shaped loaf (or loaves) to prepared baking sheet, cover loosely with greased plastic wrap, and let proof until dough looks bloated and dimply, and starts to spread out, 60 to 75 minutes. Adjust oven rack to lower center position and heat oven to 425 degrees.
- 4) Whisk egg white and milk together and brush over sides and top of loaf (loaves). Make 6 or 7 slashes, 1/2-inch-deep, on dough top(s) with a serrated knife. Bake for 15 minutes, then lower oven temperature to 400 degrees and bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of the loaf registers 200 degrees, 15 to 20 minutes for

small loaves and 25 to 30 for larger loaf. Transfer to a wire rack and cool to room temperature. Slice and serve.

Makes 1 large or 2 small loaves

