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For my final project, I decided to bake bread. I was born and raised in the Dominican Republic until I was about 10 when I moved to the United States. Growing up in the Dominican Republic I have many beautiful memories of my siblings and I sitting down for an afternoon snack to drink coffee with Pan De Agua which translates to water bread; that's why I decided to bake this special bread. I had never baked bread before so I did a lot of research and watched some YouTube videos but ultimately when it was time to bake, I ended up following one video and one recipe. However, I was certainly not ready for what I was getting into.

I am very cheap so I decided to mix the dough by hand since some of the videos suggested it as a possibility. I utilized glass pans for baking since I already had them versus a metal cooking pan. These are the ingredients I use. 2 cups of bread flour. 2 tsp fast-rising instant yeast. 1 TBSP of salt. 1 cup of cold water. 1 TBSP of olive oil. 3 cups of hot water to create vapors in the oven. Upon mixing the dry ingredients and the olive oil with the cup of cold water the dough became extremely sticky. Good thing I was wearing gloves. I told myself, well maybe it is supposed to be this way but I couldn't recall any of my research mentioning sticky dough.

After mixing for about 5 minutes I was beginning to get a bit frustrated. The dough consistency did not change, so I decided to recruit some help being that my hands were already in a sticky situation. I had my husband add a bit more flour to the mixing bowl in hopes that it would help, and it did. What I didn't take into consideration was how long I had to mix the dough and how strenuous it was. As I am sitting here hours later writing this essay I still feel my shoulders sore from mixing the dough for about 20 minutes. As if I had an upper body workout. This was the hardest part of the whole recipe.

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After getting the dough to the right consistency I cut it into small pieces like the recipe stated, rolled them up, and set them aside covered with a towel. I let the dough rest for about an hour before placing it in the oven with hot water. I followed the baking instructions in the video however the result was a bit disappointing. My bread was chunky on the outside but the inside was more like sour bread instead of fluffy and soft.

Teaching myself to bake bread I have learned that baking bread requires patience, attention to detail, and a lot of strength which makes me appreciate more the generations of women who had to bake bread as a routine domestic task while watching children, doing house chores and attending to their husbands' needs. We women are certainly warriors with indefinite capabilities.

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Sources:

<https://youtu.be/xN5N5Whm5FA?feature=shared>

<https://www.cocinadominicana.com/pan-de-agua>