

# A Better Garlic Bread

Serves 4–8

Garlic bread, when done correctly, is one of life's finest, simplest pleasures, up there with a salt and pepper roast chicken and a perfect salad with lemon. It's basic and should not be overthought. But do not, under any circumstance, treat it or mistake this as garlic butter on toast—or worse, soggy bread soaked in garlic butter—because garlic bread is neither of those things.

Garlic bread should be so buttery and garlicky that it borders on obscene. It should be golden brown in all the right places, like on the edges and also in the center, which should be shatteringly crispy, giving way to a tender, impossibly buttery center.

The secret to executing this better garlic bread is treating it like french toast. I don't mean, like, use eggs or sugar or anything, but in the sense that you really, truly do need to soak the hell out of it with your garlicky butter mixture enough so you say "Wow, this is the best garlic bread I've ever had" instead of "Is this toast with garlic butter?" Because now that I have made the distinction, I hope you see the difference.

Yes, the anchovies are a secret weapon here, but the garlic cloves, slowly softening and caramelizing in the oil that you then use in tandem with the butter to brush onto a halved baguette, are the real reason to make this. Once you start simmering them in the oil, you'll see why. Don't worry about getting them too broken up when making the butter mixture—a few chunks of the garlic here and there are a welcome addition. This butter mixture makes enough for 1 or 2 baguettes, depending on the baguette size, but start with one and you'll either have just enough or some leftover—because to run out of garlic butter would be a true crime.

**1 head of garlic, cloves separated, peeled, and smashed with the back of a knife**

**½ cup olive oil**

**½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened**

**1 2 oz. tin (or ½ 4 oz. jar) anchovies, drained ("optional")**

**Pinch of red pepper flakes (if you like it hot n spicy)**

**Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**1–2 baguettes or ciabatta or Italian style bread or honestly, whatever (depending on size), halved lengthwise**

**Flaky sea salt**

**Finely chopped fresh parsley (optional)**

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.

2. Heat the garlic and oil in a small pot over medium heat. Cook, swirling occasionally, until the garlic has started to audibly sizzle in the fat, about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to the lowest possible setting and continue to cook, swirling the pot occasionally, until the garlic is totally tender and a nice golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

3. Transfer oil mixture to a medium bowl along with butter, anchovies, and red pepper flakes, if using. Using your fork, mash everything together so that the garlic cloves break down and the butter softens even further, and everything turns into an impossibly delicious, creamy paste (if some of the garlic doesn't break down, that's fine, too). Season with salt and pepper.

4. Using a spoon, evenly distribute this deliciousness onto each half of the bread, letting it really soak in there.

5. Place the bread on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until the edges are super crunchy, golden brown delicious, but the centers are still soft and supple—and yes, that might be the only time I ever use the word supple, 8 to 10 minutes.

6. Remove from oven and sprinkle the breads with flaky salt and parsley, if you're a real traditionalist.