11 Tips for Making Bread/Cutting Boards

Bread/cutting boards are quick and easy projects that make great gifts for birthdays, holidays, house-warmings, weddings, and more. Here are 11 great tips for doing a better job when making these boards.

1: **Choosing the right wood.** When making bread/cutting boards, choose close-grained hardwoods such as maple, cherry, walnut, birch, etc. for maximum durability. Using strips of contrasting woods enhances the appearance of these boards.

2: **Grain direction.** For stability, it's best to arrange your boards so the wood grain of each is going in the same direction. Vertical annual rings, where possible, are best.

3: **Cutting your wood strips.** Rip all wood strips to exactly the same width, making them about 1/16" wider than the thickness of the cutting board you're making. Once they're ripped, run each edge over the jointer, removing 1/32" in each pass.

4: **For added strength...**it's sometimes a good idea to run a 1/4" – 20 threaded steel rod through your cutting board from side-to-side. This is especially important to help avoid warpage and separation when making large, countertop boards that are over 15" wide. A rod every 6" to 8" is a good idea. Drill all your rod holes on a drill press, using stops to be sure each hole is in <u>exactly</u> the same location. On your two outside pieces of stock, do <u>not</u> drill a ¼" through-hole for your rod ends. Instead, drill a 3/8" to 7/16" deep counterbore to conceal the tightening bolts on each end of each rod.

5: **Choose the right glue.** Always use a waterproof glue for bread/cutting boards. Titebond II (r) makes a good choice, as does two-part resorcinol epoxy glue. If you're using resorcinol, be sure to scrub all excess glue off your surfaces **before** it dries. If you leave hard glue on the surface, then run your assembled board through a thickness planer, it could nick your planer knives.

6: **Smooth all board surfaces.** If you have a thickness planer, run both surfaces of your board through the planer before proceeding. If you don't have a thickness planer, you can smooth your surfaces with a Hand Scraper, Belt Sander, Pad Sander or any combination of these tools.

7: **Round all board corners for a *softer* appearance.** Once you've glued your board together and allowed the glue to set-up thoroughly, it is recommended that you radius all board corners to help avoid chipping them or breaking the corners off your finished project. Do this on your bandsaw or scrollsaw, then smooth them carefully on the disc sander.

8: **Add a *gutter* to contain liquids.** Use a "3-in-1" Router Bit or unpiloted core box bit to form a *gutter* around all sides of your board, about 3/4" in from its edges. This *gutter* will help contain blood from meats or any other liquids.

9: **Round-over all board edges.** Use a Round-Over Router Bit to "roll" all board edges for an improved appearance and better feel when handling the board.

10: **Perform a final, light hand sanding...**to remove any "fuzzy" surfaces or edges. Follow-up by using a tack cloth to remove any dust or residue before applying your finish.

11: **Apply the correct finish.** Always finish boards such as these (and all wooden utensils that are designed to come in contact with food products) with an appropriate finish such as *Salad Bowl Finish* or *Preserve Oil Finish*.