

## **Holy Cranberries, That Fruitcake is Good!**

### ***House of Bread Franchising Celebrates the Holiday Season By Offering Customers A New Twist on Fruitcake – The Holiday Loaf***

*San Luis Obispo, Calif., December 14, 2004* – House of Bread Franchising is pleased to offer customers a delicious alternative to traditional fruitcake this holiday season: the holiday loaf. The fresh-baked treat is a delicious, nutritious, fruit-laden bread with hints of vanilla and honey and is available most days at House of Bread locations until after the New Year.

“Traditional fruitcakes are loaded with unhealthy refined sugars and bleached white flour, not to mention the little green and red gummy objects that are unidentifiable,” said Sheila McCann, founder of House of Bread Franchising. “House of Bread’s holiday loaf is made with a high protein, unbleached flour and a medley of wholesome dried fruits. Treating yourself to a slice of holiday loaf is a much healthier and tastier option, especially for those individuals looking to watch their waistlines this holiday.”

House of Bread Franchising has extended an invitation to consumers to stop by local House of Bread stores to try a generous, warm slice of holiday loaf while shopping. For those who enjoy baking, the company is pleased to offer the following holiday loaf recipe:

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 1/2 cups of warm water (approximately 100 degrees)
- 2 packages or one and 3/4 tablespoons of active dry yeast
- 4 cups of unbleached flour (approximately 3/4 pound)
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla
- 1 cup dried fruit (we suggest cranberries, apricots, apples and golden raisins)

Combine all dried fruit into a container, add water to half the height of the dried fruit.

Proof the yeast – place the yeast in a 1/2 cup of the warm water until yeast dissolves. Add the honey to the mixture and within a few minutes small bubbles will appear as the yeast ferments. Place the remaining water, vanilla, flour and salt into a large mixing bowl and then add the yeast.

Using an electric mixer, mix on low for one minute and then increase to medium setting for 4 – 6 minutes. If the dough is too sticky, add a tablespoon of flour, and if too tough mix a few minutes longer until it feels soft. Add dried fruit when done mixing.

Cover the dough with a damp towel and let rise in a warm place for 1 1/2 hours or until the dough doubles in size. Punch down and place on flat, floured surface, shape as desired.

Brush an egg wash on bread surface and place dough on a thoroughly sprayed cookie sheet. Preheat oven to 350.

Allow the dough to rise second time, 15 – 40 minutes. Place pan in the middle of the pre-heated oven for 30 – 35 minutes. Check for doneness by tapping bottom of the loaf, it is done when it is firm and sounds hollow. Place on a wire rack to cool for a couple hours before slicing, or tear off a hunk, slather with butter and enjoy.

Yield: 1 large two pound loaf or two one-pound loaves.