

Panasonic Breadmaker SD253

by Debbie Davies published on 11 October 2004

Panasonic's breadmaker leaves little for the aspiring Jamie Oliver to do. As long as you can accurately measure ingredients and press the right buttons, then you can bake an evenly shaped, decent loaf.

Once the ingredients are in the bread pan, it's just a case of shutting the lid and selecting the baking program. A paddle mixes and kneads the dough, stopping and starting to allow rising time. This model has a dispenser for things like nuts or fruit. This saves you having to be on hand during the rising process as the dispenser automatically adds the extra ingredients at the right time. It also has a program for baking gluten free bread.

We tried several different recipes and only managed one complete failure. Our basic white loaf was soft and airy with a crisp crust and even colour. Results were not quite as good using the rapid cycle and we preferred bread made with our own ingredients to the ready-made mixes, which obviously have more additives and preservatives.

Our failure was chocolate bread. To make it we used chocolate chips, which we added later, by hand. We avoided the dispenser that gets hot during rising, so is no good for ingredients that melt.

Unfortunately, our chips melted anyway and were rapidly kneaded into the dough, turning it a uniform brown. We rang Panasonic's dedicated telephone helpline about this problem, and Panasonic suggested we froze the chocolate chips but this made no difference to the end result, which was annoyingly nothing like chocolate bread we had ever seen before.



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VERDICT

This machine regularly gains top marks from the Good Housekeeping Institute, which tests lots of electrical appliances and we can see why. We successfully made wholemeal bread, which can easily be flat and dense, as well as white and flavoured breads. We also set the machine in the evening to bake fresh bread for the morning.

But before you get excited, this was not as good as it sounded. Once cooked, the bread only stays warm for a short while so, like catching a great sunset, everyone has to be there at just the right moment.

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At a glance

What is it?

Breadmaker

Good

Produces good wholemeal bread as well as white loaves

Bad

Uses dried yeast, not fresh

Verdict

Paying a small premium is well worth it for what is regarded as one of the best breadmakers

Price £80

Our score

7/10

Your score

9/10