Cuban Bread

Sponge

1/4 cup water

14 cup flour

1/2 teaspoon yeast

Dough

3 cups flour

2 teaspoons yeast

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1 cup warm water

1/4 cup lard

Whisk water, flour and yeast together with fork for sponge.

Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Whisk together flour, yeast and salt.

Add warm water, lard and sponge.  Knead 10 minutes with dough hook.

Transfer to a greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let rise 45 minutes.

Cut dough into 2 equal pieces.

Flatten each piece into a 10x6" rectangle.

Fold top edge to the middle.

Fold bottom edge to middle.

Fold in half so top and bottom meet.

Flip seam side down and roll to a 15" loaf with tapered ends.

Transfer to silpat lined baking sheet.  Cover with plastic wrap, let rise 30 min.

Make one slit down the center of each loaf stopping 1 1/2" from ends.

Cover loaves with disposable pan and bake 20 minutes at 450.

Remove pan with tongs and bake an additional 10-12 minutes.

Transfer to rack to cool.