

Sourdough Made Easy

SIMPLE SOURDOUGH RECIPES FOR THE HOME COOK



MELISSA GRIFFITHS

BLESS  MESS

Published by Melissa Griffiths

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SIMPLE SOURDOUGH RECIPES FOR THE HOME COOK

by Melissa Griffiths, creator of **BLESS  MESS**

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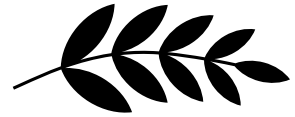
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INTRODUCTION



Every journey has a story, and here is my personal sourdough story.

The sourdough starter that I use in my kitchen is roughly 23 years-old. It was started by a woman in my town named Becky who owned a little vineyard. She was the primary caregiver for her husband and son who both had cancer and she got into sourdough bread-baking for health reasons as part of the care she was giving her family.

Becky had two friends, Rhonda and Michelle, both of whom lived in my little valley and both of whom she shared her starter with. I never knew Becky - she passed before I lived here - but Michelle and Rhonda were friends and mentors to me for years. Michelle told me that the sourdough starter was passed around between them for ages. Life would happen, and one friend of the group would neglect her starter and eventually kill it. But not to worry, the other friends still had their starters, all from the same beginning, and they could share it again with one another.

Sourdough baking came into my life in a somewhat unusual way. Rhonda, who taught me about permaculture living, year-round greenhouse growing, foraging for locally-grown healing tea, and power healing massage passed away unexpectedly one evening while she was out feeding her chickens. My friend and mentor was gone before I could say goodbye.

Rhonda's husband and best friend Michelle asked if I could help with food for her celebration of life. Of course I could and would. I wanted to feed the people who would gather to celebrate her what she would have fed them herself. I decided to serve homemade sourdough bread with homemade jams and jellies, egg salad and chicken salad sandwiches on sourdough bread, fresh lemonade, homemade yogurt with rhubarb compote from her own rhubarb plants, and other dishes she loved to make. It was truly a meal she would have made for you herself if you were coming to the farm.

Michelle, her best friend, gave me her sourdough starter from the back of her fridge where it had been stored, and I had a few weeks to figure out how to use it. Michelle also handed me a photocopy of a page of recipes she had typed up for me to try as this was my first time doing anything with sourdough. The recipes had "Michelle", "Rhonda", or "Becky", next to each one indicating which friend had shared it with the others. A basic loaf, english muffins, sourdough waffles - just a few of their favorite recipes but a great place for me to start.

I had no idea what I was doing but I followed the directions and I produced something that looked a bit like a loaf of bread. I tried two more times to make bread and the loaves were ok. I made another eight loaves for Rhonda's celebration of life, and that was my first experience of sharing sourdough bread with others.

I spent days and hours preparing food to honor Rhonda and feed the people that loved her most. I packed it all up in coolers and drove out to her farm, set up piles of food in her own home and kitchen, and refilled lemonade pitchers as her closest friends and family sat and talked through the afternoon. Her grandson hugged me and thanked me that day and told me eating these things, her recipes, things she loved to make, was like coming home to her and the farm one last time. Sourdough helped to ease the burden of losing his grandmother just a bit that day.

After that, I stuck the sourdough starter in the back of my fridge and life went on. It sat there, making me feel guilty every time I cleaned the fridge for almost eighteen months. It grew a layer of water over the top of it, and the water turned from brown to deep black.

Finally, after a year and a half, I told myself I had to do something with it. It was time to move on and throw it away, or it was time to learn how to really use it. Looking back, I knew that the loaves I made for Rhonda weren't that wonderful. They were edible, but they weren't the beautiful sourdough loaves I'd been seeing online.

I decided to give it one more try.

The resurrection of Rhonda's sourdough starter was no small task. That spring was a new awakening for it, and I discarded and fed it 2 times a day for nearly a week, but by and by, it perked up and was active again. After over a year of neglect, it was ready to be used again.

This time I needed to learn more about it. I started educating myself. I bought books, I watched videos, and I practiced. I had no time for math, hydration ratios, long stretching and folding stints. I was in the middle of building a house and raising 5 kids. I kept searching for a simple method to making bread that seemed possible, based on the simple printed sheet of paper that my starter first came with. And I kept coming back to the simple recipes Becky, Rhonda, and Michelle had used for decades before me.

I baked a loaf of bread - trying new things, new recipes, implementing newly acquired understanding - every day for 6 days in a row. They were bricks, they didn't rise, the crumb was very inconsistent, one was burnt on the bottom and raw in the middle, but finally I had watched enough videos, read enough articles, and tried enough recipes that I finally made my first beautiful loaf of bread that was gorgeous and tasted great. I'm still so glad that I didn't give up before this point.

I kept baking with my sourdough starter and trying new recipes. I found Emilie Raffa online, and she taught me so much too. I baked a loaf of bread for the county fair and won a purple ribbon (the highest you can get!) in the baked goods bread category. I baked and sent loaves to friends for their birthdays, and I baked and walked half loaves over to my neighbor to eat while still warm because nothing beats warm bread.

And then that fall, I had a wild bout with a bone infection, and I had a toe partially amputated. I consider myself a strong person with a high tolerance for pain, but this little bone removal literally knocked me on my back. I could barely sit up for the first 10 days as I couldn't tolerate my foot lower than my head. I crawled to the bathroom and didn't leave my room for days and nearly weeks, all during the Thanksgiving holiday. For an able-bodied woman who is good at and used to being busy and getting things done, this was extremely hard for me. The pain was phenomenal. Emotionally as well as physically, I was struggling, and I let myself do and feel what felt best at the time. For someone who cooks all of the time, I didn't want to cook. Even weeks later, I couldn't tolerate the pain of having my foot down. But I did want to bake sourdough bread. I'd hop to the kitchen in the morning, prop my food on top of my countertop (good thing I'm very tall) and feed my starter. After a day of managing life and kids and work, I'd put everyone to bed and go make my dough. Making sourdough bread dough in the dark quiet of my house was therapy for me. It was quiet and slow. I wasn't blogging about it or taking pictures of it or even writing down what I was doing. I was making it because it felt good in my heart, and it grounded me in a way that only some things can.

I spent most of the holidays at home that winter, enjoying a quiet, slower season than was typical, and sending my kids to neighbors and friends to deliver loaves of my healing sourdough bread.

After Christmas, my heart kept telling me to take a loaf to Michelle. I was so excited to show her how far my loaves had come since the ones I had brought to the farm nearly two years earlier. I baked her a beautiful pecan raisin crusty loaf and drove over to her house a few miles up the road. I hadn't seen her in a few months, but hadn't bothered to call either.

I knocked on the door and her husband let me inside. There was Michelle, sitting in a chair in her front room, wrapped in a blanket, and looking more yellow and jaundice than anyone I'd ever seen.

I teared up quickly and she asked, "Who told you?"

"I didn't know anything. The universe and the bread told me to come." I replied.

We both smiled and both knew that was true.

Michelle, the last of those three women who shared their starter through the thick and the thin, my friend, passed on February 14th, weeks after I stopped by. In those weeks, I was able to take freezer meals, hot meals and fun meals that just sounded good to her, and loaves of sourdough bread that reminded her of her friends. She was a private person, and I don't think I would have known she was sick before her passing if that loaf of bread hadn't led me to her front step.

Sourdough bread-baking has been a journey for me. It's been healing on many levels. It's helped me through the pain of loss, physical pains, and loss of abilities. It's helped me to have something physical to connect with others who are in the middle of their own struggles.

Sourdough baking is more than making bread; there's a little bit of magic in it. It has grounded me and steadied me in a way that's hard to explain, but I know is not unique to me. After teaching many people how to make a starter and sourdough bread through a global pandemic, I know that it's brought joy and comfort to others in the same way it has to me.

And that long road has led me here: to writing a book and sharing a story, and teaching you the simple yet magical art of sourdough baking.

Let's figure this out together,

Melissa



WHAT IS SOURDOUGH BREAD?



Sourdough bread is made by the fermentation of dough using naturally occurring lactobacilli (bacteria) and yeast. This mix of yeast and bacteria is found in a culture, called a sourdough starter. Sourdough bread can have a more sour taste than bread made with baker's yeast, due to the lactic acid produced by the lactobacilli.

You make sourdough bread from the same basic ingredients that you use for any other bread. The two most important ingredients are flour and yeast.

Yeast is a single-cell fungus that breaks down the starches in wheat flour, forming sugar. This is fermentation. When the yeast works on the starch and sugar molecules, it gives off carbon dioxide gas and alcohol. That reaction is what makes the bread rise. In sourdough, you use natural yeast that is found on your flour and in the air to complete this process.

Although sourdough bread was superseded in commercial bakeries in the twentieth century, it has always existed in homes and is part of a definite revival among artisan bakers as well as home cooks. (source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sourdough>)

THE SOURDOUGH MYTH DISPELLED

Myth: Sourdough bread is complicated to make and often doesn't turn out.

Reality: Sourdough bread can definitely be complicated and fussy, and you can ruin your loaf of bread. It took me six tries to even get a loaf that looked like a loaf. There can be math and hydration ratios and waiting a day while you make an autolyse, another day for the dough to rise, and a third day to make your bread. Waiting three days for a potentially failed loaf is a lot. I'm here to share what I have learned through tons of research, study, and trial and error - the best method for everyday cooks. This is a really simple way to make sourdough bread that isn't fussy, doesn't take a lot of extra time, and is foolproof! I'm here to teach this simple method to you, so you can enjoy it as much as I do.



SOURDOUGH BAKING TOOLS



As you start on your sourdough baking journey, you won't need many new tools, but there are a few things you might want to pick up along the way.

You'll need a mixing bowl, a scale to weigh your ingredients, a dutch oven with a lid, and a few dish towels (to cover your dough and to line a mixing bowl with for the second rise).

A heavy ceramic mixing bowl is nice to work in and the weight of it makes mixing stiff dough a bit easier to mix.

When it comes to a scale, find one that is inexpensive and easy to use, and has easy-to-replace batteries.

People have had luck using just about any oven-safe pot with a lid to bake their bread in, though I think a dutch oven produces a better and more consistent loaf. You can often find dutch ovens at thrift stores or antique shops and they are often on sale online. You can use a dutch oven that is cast iron inside or enamel lined. Both work great.

If you'd like to get a few additional sourdough baking supplies, here are my recommendations.

The only other specialty supplies that I own are a bread proofing basket (a batard) and a lame (bread slashing tool).

A 9-inch round proofing basket will get used often once you get into sourdough baking. Most baskets come lined with muslin and you can keep the liner in or take it out. I have worked with the liner in and with the basket without the liner. It's up to your personal preference. Just know that which ever you are using, the liner or just the basket, will need to be well seasoned before use (like a cast iron skillet). You'll want to spray the liner or basket with water and coat it well with flour a few times before use. The first few times you use it, be sure to use an extra hand of flour to help prevent sticking. When you are done baking, simply tap the bread basket bowl-side-down on the edge of your sink to remove any extra flour and store. You won't wash the bowl or liner in between use (again, think of it like the seasoning on a cast iron skillet).

A lame, which is essentially a razor blade on a stick, is a really fun tool. I think scoring the dough is my favorite part of making sourdough bread. Using an extra sharp lame gives you a lot more creative freedom when it comes to bread scoring, and you'll get cleaner shapes.

I bought an inexpensive bread basket and lame together online for around \$10 and they were well worth the investment.

I wouldn't recommend buying longer or oval bread baskets unless you have a dutch oven big enough to fit an oval loaf of bread.

There you have it - a few simple tools you'll need to start down your bread making journey and a few extra tools that will make you feel like a fancy baker.



SOURDOUGH BREAD-BAKING INGREDIENTS



Sourdough Starter

A sourdough starter is a little jar of magic. Wild yeast that is in the air and on ingredients like your flour have been nurtured into a live and active culture along with some beneficial lactobacilli. This mixture of wild yeast and bacteria is made from fermenting flour with water. This fermented mixture acts as the leavening agent in bread and bread products like bagels.

There are a few ways that you can get a sourdough starter. You can make your own sourdough starter in about ten days (see [page 7](#)). This is a fun way to really get to know the process, but it's also the most tedious and longest. You can also ask around your friends and community to see if anyone already has an active sourdough starter. Once you have one, it's very easy to multiply and share. I have found that crowdsourcing on your local social media sales page is a great place to find things like this, if you don't already have a sourdough-making friend. Another option is to contact a local bakery and see if they keep a starter and if they are willing to sell you some. A fourth option is to buy a starter online. They generally come dried and take a little bit of work to get

active again; you'll need to feed it or discard and feed it every day for a few days to get it revived. A few will come as wet starters in the mail. I know that you can buy a fresh starter from the King Arthur Flour website, and they mail it to your house. There's a bit of cost involved but I've heard really good things about their mailed fresh starter.



Flour

There are all kinds of flour in the world, and when it comes to sourdough baking, a lot of people use a lot of hard to find flours. It's fun, but it's not very budget- or time-friendly to be working with eight different flours. This entire sourdough book was developed with home cooks in mind; for that reason, I have developed all recipes in this book with only two kinds of flour: all-purpose and whole wheat flour.

That being said, there are still things you need to know about both kinds of flour.

When it comes to all-purpose flour, I would recommend using Bob's Red Mill or King Arthur Flour all-purpose flour. In an ideal world, you'd also find those in organic and unbleached. I used Bob's Red Mill all-purpose organic flour and organic whole wheat flour for testing all of these recipes. Quality ingredients really shine when the ingredient list is very short.

White flours such as cake flour, all-purpose, and bread flour vary in gluten and protein levels, which affects the structure and texture of what is being made. I have found that even different brands of all-purpose flours vary between the amount of protein in the flour. That is why I recommend those two brands. They have a higher amount of protein than some other brands.

If you choose to use other brands of flour, you might find that your dough is extra sticky. This means that the flour has a lower protein and gluten level. Less protein means that the flour will absorb less liquid and less gluten will mean that the dough will struggle to hold its structure and shape. If you find that happening, feel free to add an additional 50-100 grams of flour during the first mixing stage of the dough. It's harder to add flour while it's in any of the rising stages.

Organic flour is preferred because it will have more natural yeast in the flour and less residue of agents used in non-organic processes. Think of it like this: you want the live and active organisms in your starter to have the best chance at thriving in your dough. By removing things that might inhibit their growth (bleaching agents in flour processing or non-organic pesticides while the grains are growing) you increase their chances of thriving. I'm not a scientist, or here to debate the pros or cons of organic farming, but I have done a few side-by-side tests, and there are noticeable differences in bread quality, flavor, and rise when using organic flour.

Here's some research done by Cooks Illustrated to help you see how all-purpose flours vary from brand to brand. This has to do with what wheat is used, how it is grown, where it is grown, and how it is milled and processed. There are a lot of variables at play, so it makes sense that flours will vary from brand to brand.

High Protein

King Arthur Unbleached Enriched All-Purpose Flour: 11.7% protein

Heckers/Ceresota Unbleached Enriched Pre-Sifted All-Purpose Flour: 11.4-11.8% protein

Moderate Protein

Gold Medal Unbleached All-Purpose Flour: 10.5% protein

Gold Medal Bleached All-Purpose Flour: 10.5% protein

Pillsbury Unbleached Enriched All-Purpose Flour: 10-11% protein

Pillsbury Bleached Enriched All-Purpose Flour: 10-11% protein

Hodgson Mill Unbleached All-Purpose Flour: 9.5-10.5% protein

Martha White Enriched Bleached Pre-Sifted All-Purpose Flour: 9-11.25% protein

Low Protein

White Lily Enriched Bleached Plain All-Purpose Flour: 7-8.5% protein

Source: <https://www.cooksillustrated.com/articles/596-a-guide-to-all-purpose-flour-shopping-tips-the-best-brands-and-more>

I buy flour in bulk (25-pound bags) directly from our little grocery store, and I store it in 5-gallon food safe buckets with gamma lids (very cool lids that attach to the bucket with a screw-on center - very user friendly).

Water

Maybe you wouldn't typically think of water as a special ingredient, but when you are only working with 4 ingredients, the water matters.

Like organic flour, water that is highly treated or chlorinated will not help your live and active culture reach its full potential. If your water is very treated, consider running it through a filter or using bottled water.

Spring water that is untreated or well water tends to work well.



Salt

Have you ever accidentally forgotten the salt in a bread recipe? If so, you know how important such a small amount of one ingredient can be. It adds so much flavor to the bread and it just doesn't taste good without it.

I tested these recipes using fine sea salt.

If you are using something other than fine sea salt, you may need to play around with the amount to find what works best. Some salts are saltier than others, believe it or not.

If you are using measuring spoons to measure out your salt instead of weighing it, remember that different salts have different volumes. A teaspoon of small dense table salt will have more salt in the teaspoon than a teaspoon of light flaky kosher salt. I recommend weighing your ingredients when possible. I use the fine sea salt from Costco.



Quality ingredients really shine and improve sourdough baking. The process needed to make the bread tends to be easier when using high-quality ingredients, and you'll end up with better and more consistent results.



HOW TO MAKE A SOURDOUGH STARTER FROM SCRATCH



Before you can start making bread, you'll need to have a live and active culture or a sourdough starter that is a healthy mix of wild yeast and bacteria. You can make a sourdough starter at home with just flour and water.

During the COVID-19 crisis, I taught the internet how to make a starter. I spent hours a day for many weeks helping people go from flour and water in a jar to a bubbly active starter. I helped them troubleshoot, and I learned so much from this experience. Talking to hundreds of people about what was working and the issues they were facing was invaluable experience for me as a teacher. I feel confident that together we can get you there, too!

This method keeps a very small starter. I'll teach you how to bulk it up for sharing with your neighbor or having more for additional baking later. For now, keep it small; you'll have less waste with this method than other methods calling for cups of flour at a time.

Here's how to make your own sourdough starter

Start with a clean glass jar (I use a pint mason jar). You'll also need flour, water, something to cover the jar that is breathable (like a scrap from an old, clean cotton t-shirt), and a small spatula for stirring and scraping down the edges of the jar. That's it!

You'll have the most success using all-purpose unbleached organic flour and untreated water for making your starter. Please see the Sourdough Bread-Baking Ingredients section for more details and explanations of the types of ingredients needed and why.

To begin:

DAY 1: Add 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour to your jar, and stir well to combine. Scrape the edges down to the bottom. Cover with a breathable top. I like to use a piece of an old t-shirt and then use the ring that came on the mason jar to screw it on. You can also use some light weave fabric and a rubberband around the top to secure it.

Set in an out-of-the-way place that stays a somewhat constant temperature (around 70 to 75 degrees F.). If you don't have something to weigh your flour, it will be about 6 tablespoons of flour and 4 tablespoons of water. Set aside for 24 hours.

DAY 2: After 24 hours, add an additional 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour. Stir well, scrape down the sides, cover, and set aside.

DAY 3: Discard all of the starter in the jar except for 25 grams. Add 25 grams of water and 25 grams of flour to the starter and stir well to combine. Cover and set aside.

DAY 4: Feed the mixture 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour without discarding. Cover and set aside.

DAY 5 AND ON: Discard all of your starter mixture except for 25 grams (or you can start with a clean jar and measure in 25 grams of your starter mixture and add your next ingredients to the clean jar). Add 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour, stir well, scrape down the sides, cover, and set aside. You'll discard and feed your starter every day from this point on and keep it covered at room temperature. When your starter starts rising and doubling or tripling in size within a 24-hour period (before the next feeding), it is ready to use. It should also smell yeasty and be bubbly, though the bubbles might not be large. This rising can happen in as short as 7 days and as long as 14 days.

NOTE: It's very normal for your starter to be very active in the first few days and then slow down to almost a stop and slowly rev back up again. You did not ruin it! There's just other bacteria at play in the beginning and those are getting used up. The slow build of the yeast and the bacteria is important, so slowing down is normal. Keep going!

HOMEMADE SOURDOUGH STARTER FAQ & TROUBLESHOOTING



You are working with only a few things when it comes to making a starter: flour, water, time, and temperature. If things aren't progressing like they should, one of those four things needs to be tweaked. When the conditions are right, it'll work - I promise. If you are having issues, change something! The number one issue I saw when helping hundreds of people set their starter up was chilly house temperatures. Second was using bleached flours from which too much of the natural yeast had been stripped or using treated water that was killing what was alive on the flour. Third, was not following the feeding schedule (not discarding every day after day 5).

Fun fact: most people name their sourdough starter! Feel free to do the same.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT THIS PROCESS ISN'T CREATING A GIANT MOLDY HEALTH HAZARD?

Valid thought! If you leave other things out on the counter, they get funky or even gross. It turns out that the starch in wheat flour is something that not a lot of bacteria can easily handle. Yeast also creates special enzymes to deal with starch. The yeast and lactobacilli "poison" the culture with the alcohol and the lactic acid they produce, and that keeps other unwanted bacteria out. If you do run into mold, you should start over, but that's really rare. Of all the people I helped, only about three had issues with mold, and only two of them had recurring issues. They both bought a new bag of flour, and the issue resolved itself. That leads me to believe they had a bag of flour that had molded in their home, which isn't common.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN MY STARTER IS READY?

Your starter will bubble, double or triple in size after feeding, smell like yeast bread, and get frothy on top (you'll see bubbles and activity on the top of the jar). For most people, it will be ready to go after 7-14 days. If you live in an arid climate, it can take as long as 14 days to be fully ready. Another test: after feeding, when the starter is at its peak of bubbles and height, you can put 1/4 of the starter in a cup of water. If it floats, it's ready. If it sinks, keep feeding it and try again in a few days (or try sooner after feeding — if it's started to deflate after feeding, it will sink, too). The float test isn't the gospel truth. I've found that some starters don't float and they are ready, but it's a fun thing to try. The rise in volume is the surest sign the starter is ready.

MY STARTER ROSE BUT THEN IT FELL. IS THAT NORMAL?

Yes! The rise and fall cycle will vary from starter to starter and even through the seasons. In the summer, my kitchen is warmer so my starter rises and falls more quickly. In the winter, my starter rises more slowly, but it also stays tall or peaked for a longer period of time. Yours will ebb and flow with age and conditions as well. Most starters will rise and fall within a 24-hour period. How quickly it rises and how long it stays peaked will depend on your starter and your conditions. I'd encourage you to feed in the mornings so that you can see it all day long and get a feel for how yours behaves. You want to bake with it while the starter is at its peak, give or take a little, so you'll want to know when that is and feed it accordingly.

DO I HAVE TO FEED MY SOURDOUGH STARTER EVERY DAY FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE?

You do not need to feed your starter every day once it is established (doubling or tripling in size after feeding). If you are not baking, simply store your your starter in the fridge. Place it in the fridge a few hours after feeding. At times you are not baking, remove the starter from the fridge and feed it once a week even if you aren't going to use it to bake (it still needs to be fed, just less often). When feeding it, discard all the starter except for 25 grams and add 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour to the 25 grams of remaining starter. Let it rest at room temperature for 1-3 hours, and then lightly cover (I put a lid on it, but don't screw the lid down) and stick back in the fridge. You can keep up this schedule for a very long time. And if you miss a week here or there, it'll be fine.

MY STARTER HAS A THICK CRUST ON TOP, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Your starter is drying out too much between feedings. Simply replace the fabric topper with a lid that rests on the top (don't screw the lid on the mason jars - just rest it on the top).

IF I'VE KEPT MY SOURDOUGH STARTER IN THE FRIDGE, HOW DO I PREPARE IT FOR BAKING?

To use your starter out of the fridge, simply remove it from the fridge and stir in 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour (don't discard here). Let it get bubbly, and then you are ready to use it. I normally pull mine out and feed in the morning to prepare it to make a batch of bread dough that evening (the dough will rest overnight and will be baked the next day).

WHAT IS THAT BLACK/BROWN/WHITE/RED SPOT (OR STREAKS) GROWING ON THE TOP OF MY STARTER?

During this process, your starter should smell like yeast bread. If at any time you see mold growing on the top, throw it away and start over. In my three years of sourdough making, I've only had my starter grow mold once. (There's a story here: we were doing a science experiment in the kitchen that involved growing rice mold, and even though my starter was not close to the mold, it must have been in the air and traveled to the starter!). That being said, it only takes one mold spore to spoil an immature starter. Mold can be in your kitchen dish drainer or in your window sill from winter condensation. If you have mold issues, try placing your starter in a different part of the house.

HOW MUCH STARTER DO I NEED TO MAKE BREAD?

This is a very small starter; you don't have a lot to manage or throw away each time. I really like that. Some people keep large quantities of starter and make things like crackers from the discard. If you are using recipes that need more than 50 to 75 grams of starter at a time, you'll want to make your starter a little larger the morning you want to make that recipe. Or if you want to make more than one loaf at a time, simply feed it more! If I'm doing a lot of baking one day, I'll feed it 100 to 150 grams of both water and flour, and then I'll have more starter ready to use. If you do a lot of baking, you might want to keep your starter that large very often. You'll get a feel for it.

CAN I SHARE MY STARTER WITH A FRIEND?

Yes! I'd wait and share it after you have gotten it fully developed and ready to bake with it. Simply feed it a double dose, divide it into two jars, and give it to your friend that day with instructions on how to use it, and how to care for it.

HOW DO I REVIVE A STARTER THAT HAS BEEN NEGLECTED IN THE FRIDGE?

If you've let your starter go a long time in the fridge without feedings, you will see a layer of liquid on the top. This is hooch, or an alcohol that your yeast made. Simply pour off the liquid. It's OK if the liquid has turned black; it's just really neglected. If the top of your sourdough starter is a bit black too, scrape it out with a spoon and throw it away. Follow the directions for making a new starter, but on day one, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of your old starter to the mix, then throw the rest away and move forward with the process. It takes about as much effort to bring it back from the dead as it does to make a new one.

DO I HAVE TO THROW AWAY THE "DISCARD" ON THE DAYS THAT I'M DISCARDING AND FEEDING?

No! You can collect it in a jar and keep it in the fridge until you are ready to use it. I use mine in waffles most often. Other common sourdough starter discard recipes include crackers, muffins, and pancakes. You can even add it to a traditional loaf of yeast bread in place of some of the water and flour. An older starter has basically no yeast in it (at least not that's active), so most of the time the discard recipes will use other things like commercial yeast, baking soda, or baking powder for the leavening.

HOW CAN I SPEED UP THE PROCESS OF MAKING MY STARTER?

Most schedules will have you feed your new starter every 24 hours, but you can feed it every 12 hours to develop your starter more quickly. I would only do this for 1-2 days in a row, then take a break and watch it for 24 hours. Also, you can incorporate whole grains into your feedings. The whole grains have more natural yeast on them and help the process along. If the weather is permitting, try opening a window or allowing your starter to rest outside in the shade for the afternoon. Having some fresh air in the house can help the wild yeast find your starter easier.

Temperature matters and it will do better warm, about 70-75 degrees F. If your house is cold, try keeping it somewhere warm like on top of the fridge (appliances tend to give off heat). You can also do all kinds of little tricks like keep it on a heating pad, wrap it in a warm towel, or use warm water when feeding it. These things will help aid your starter!

TROUBLESHOOTING WILD YEAST

Any fermentation project is basically a science experiment, so you may experience problems when capturing and using wild yeast. Here are some common abnormalities you might run into and what you should do about them.

No Bubbles:

If your starter has zero bubbles by day 7, something in the equation is off and needs changing. I have found that if there aren't any bubbles, it's usually because you aren't keeping it warm enough, not giving it enough fresh air, not measuring the ingredients well and starting off with a really thin starter, or not following the schedule very well. Also note, it's very normal for a starter to be very active in the beginning and slow down to almost a stop in the middle before slowly building back up. If yours slows down in the middle, keep going!

Mold:

If your starter starts to look moldy, is tinged red, or stinks, then throw it out and try again. I'd also recommend when you try again, to let your starter rest in a new location, like the dining room or living room. Kitchens can have mold spores really easily, and it just takes one to ruin a batch of starter, especially when it's new and not developed. Kitchen strainers can have a bit of mold in the legs or where they collect water, and even window sills can get a little mold in the cracks from getting wet with condensation over the winter. I've also had mold on my spatula under the head where it connects to the handle. Last but not least, wash your hands well before feeding and if you have kids helping, have them do the same. Mold is actually much less common than you would think. I had very few people report mold while making starters with me.

Excess Liquid:

If you get a thin layer of water on the top of your starter after the rest period, that's OK. Just pour it off and feed it like normal. You have the bacteria that you need; you just need more yeast. This might happen in the first few days but should stop when you start feeding and discarding every day.

Starter won't rise:

If you get to day 7 and you aren't seeing your starter rising, you need to change something. Try using bottled water, switching to organic flour, or warming up the area your starter is in. I'd choose one of these three things to do first and try it for 2 days. If nothing changes, keep doing it (if you switched to organic flour, keep with organic flour) and then change another thing (increase the warmth). Watch the starter for another 1-2 days. In most cases, changing up one of those three things will solve a rising issue.





SOURDOUGH STARTERS | STEP-BY-STEP



DAY 1: Freshly mixed flour and water



DAY 2: Right before feeding
(24 hours after last feeding,
no noticeable difference)



DAY 2: Freshly fed



DAY 2: 12 hours after feeding,
small amount of rise and
a few small bubbles



DAY 3: Right before feeding (24 hours
after last feeding), deceptively tall, not
many small bubbles, and is stinky, this
is normal as extra bacteria are being
used. Don't let the rise make you
think it's ready, keep going!



DAY 3: Top view, there's not
a lot of bubbles here

SOURDOUGH STARTERS | STEP-BY-STEP



DAY 4: Freshly fed



DAY 4: 12 hours after feeding, more bubbles and more of a rise



DAY 5: Before feeding (*24 hours after last feeding*), notice the “snail trail” left behind from when the starter rose and has fallen in 24 hours. You can see the line that it got up to before it fell again.



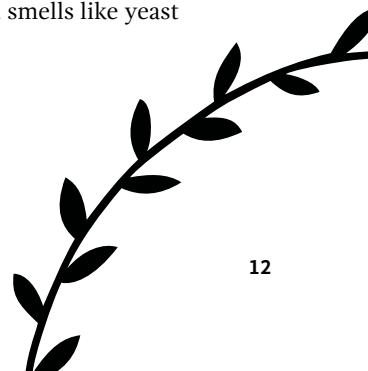
DAY 5: 12 hours after feeding, larger bubbles and good rise



DAY 6: Before feeding, you can see the height that it got to and it hasn't fully fallen at this point, looks great and smells like yeast



DAY 7: 12 hours after feeding and ready to make bread with. Rising to double in size and smells like yeast



SOURDOUGH BREAD-MAKING FAQ & TROUBLESHOOTING



I collected all the questions that the lovely folks of the internet sent me and here they are, all answered in one place!

WHAT INGREDIENTS DO I NEED FOR SOURDOUGH BREAD?

You only need a sourdough starter, flour, water, and salt. I have had the best luck using unbleached, organic flour. The natural yeast in the starter seems to do better with these flours. As far as water goes, I use tap water. If your water is highly treated, you might want to consider using bottled or filtered water. If you have a lot of chlorine in your water, you can let a glass of water sit out overnight, and that will give the chlorine time to dissipate a bit. Those are small things, but if your dough isn't rising as well as you'd like, you might want to see if changing up your flour or water matters.

HOW DO I MAKE MORE OF MY STARTER? OR WHAT IF I USED TOO MUCH STARTER ON ACCIDENT AND DON'T HAVE ENOUGH LEFT TO FEED?

Easy — simply feed it more! When you are getting it ready for baking, if you'd like to bake more than one loaf or make a recipe that uses more than 50 to 70 grams of starter, just feed it double: 100 grams of both water and flour. If you need even more than that, when the starter has peaked, feed it again. Repeat until you have the amount of starter that you need. Sometimes when I know I want to make lots of dough in the evening, I'll feed my starter 100 grams of both water and flour in the morning and then at lunch or early afternoon I'll feed it an additional 200 grams of both water and flour without discarding anything. Then by late evening (I typically make my bread dough around 9 pm after I get the kids in bed), I'll have lots of active starter to work with.

It's great to know the weight of the jars you are using. I use a wide mouth pint jar and a wide mouth quart jar most often. I weighed them both, separately and empty. Then I wrote down those weights in grams on a little piece of tape and stuck it to the cover of my scale. Now when I am baking, I know the weight minus the original weight of the jar is the amount of the starter that I have left in the jar. And then I can feed it accordingly.

I like to keep a 1:2:2 starter to flour to water ratio. The key is to keep the water and the flour at the same equal ratio (this is considered a 100% hydration starter and the kind of starter most recipes, including all in this book, have been developed with). You can play with the amount of starter you keep though. Know that by keeping less starter, it'll generally take the starter longer to peak and eat the food the water and flour provide.

I have a friend who keeps a 1:5:5 ratio. She keeps 5 grams of starter and feeds it 25 grams of water and flour. This is helpful, because occasionally I'll use more starter for a recipe than planned and I don't have as much left as normal. Instead of feeling like I ruined my life, I diligently scrape the jar out and collect my 5-10 grams of starter and just don't feed it a lot (only 25 grams of water and flour). It'll take it a full 24 hours to peak and instead of discarding anything for the next feeding, I'll go back to my 50 grams of water and flour feeding. Then it's built back up to where I normally keep it.

The opposite works, too. When I'm in a hurry to grow more starter, I won't discard and I'll keep a greater amount of starter which means it'll eat more quickly, and I'll have a risen active starter fast. I'll keep a 1:1:1 ratio if I want it to peak faster. To 50 grams of starter, I'll feed 50 grams of water and flour, and it'll generally rise and peak about 50% faster than my 1:2:2 ratio. These are little tricks to help it work for your schedule.

HOW DOES THE TEMPERATURE OF MY HOUSE AFFECT MY SOURDOUGH BREAD?

It will change how long it takes for your bread and starter to rise after being made or after a feeding. A cool house will take longer to rise, and in a warm house, your bread will rise much faster. You'll find that it takes longer in the winter for your bread to get ready, and it'll be faster in the summer. That being said, you can do things to help even out the temperature. You can use warm water on cool days in your starter or in your bread or you can wrap a warm towel around your bowl or starter jar. There are all kinds of tricks; I'd try a few if you are finding your starter or bread are being slow to rise.

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED TO MAKE SOURDOUGH BREAD?

You can get all kinds of things, but you can make do with what you have at home too. You'll want a bowl and fork to mix the dough, a dish towel to cover the bowl with, parchment paper for moving the bread to the pan (though foil sprayed with cooking spray works in a pinch, too), an oven-safe pan with a lid (a 4-5 quart pan is perfect), and a sharp or serrated knife to score the top.

Things that are nice to have include a scale for more accurate measuring, a dutch oven with a lid for baking (they trap the heat well and are just so nice to work with), a bread proofing basket instead of a bowl to let your shaped loaf rise in, and a lame (or razor blade on a stick) to make the marks on top. You can start basic and if you get more into it, you can get a few specialty items like the bread basket, a dutch oven, and a lame.

One note on the bread proofing baskets or banneton: They come in a few sizes and shapes. I'd recommend getting a 9-inch round one. I have found that unless you have a really large dutch oven, the long or oval loaves don't really fit in anything to bake them.

DO I NEED TO HEAT MY DUTCH OVEN BEFORE I ADD MY BREAD FOR COOKING?

No! You certainly can, but after a fair amount of testing, I have found that starting my bread in a room temperature dutch oven worked just great. Plus, it was so much easier to not deal with a pot that was 450 degrees F. That being said, if you'd like to try cooking your bread in a preheated dutch oven, by all means, feel free. You might like the rise or crust better, and it doesn't hurt to experiment!

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A DUTCH OVEN?

No issues! You can use a domed cooker or any large oven-safe pot with a lid. If you don't have an oven-safe lid, you can simply put a cookie sheet over the pan to act as a lid. I even had an internet friend place her dough on a cookie sheet and put it into the oven with a large oven-safe ceramic bowl covering it. There are lots of nontraditional ways to cook a loaf of bread! And not all of the recipes require a covered pan. There are many in this book that you bake in a traditional loaf pan for a more sandwich-style bread loaf.

WHY DID THE BOTTOM OF MY LOAF BURN?

Ovens and pots vary, so it could have been a few things. Try reducing the cooking time by 10 minutes or reducing the cooking temperature by 25 degrees F. You can also set your dutch oven on top of a cookie sheet while baking so that there is an added layer of insulation.

HOW CAN I GET THE CRUST DARKER AND CRUNCHIER?

After the bread has baked, remove it from the pot all together and let it bake directly on your oven rack for an additional 10 minutes for a crispier crust.

MY DOUGH IS SUPER WET AND STICKY OR MY DOUGH SPREADS AND WON'T RISE.

This is the most common issue I have seen when it comes to baking sourdough bread with all-purpose flour. Folks had issues with dough that is very wet, sticky, and will not hold its shape when worked with or while baking. It just turns into a blob of dough when they handle it and spreads as soon as it's turned out of a container. It also generally spreads when baking and doesn't puff up nicely. I am finding that there is more variation in the amount of protein and gluten in all-purpose flour than I thought would be the case. I'd recommend getting Bob's Red Mill or King Arthur Flour all-purpose flour - organic if you can. I have tested all my recipes using those two flours. If you find you are having this issue, reduce the water by 50 grams or increase the flour by 50-100 grams when you are mixing up your dough the first time. It's much easier to make these changes in the beginning instead of trying to add flour at the end. See the pictures for a reference of an appropriate texture for your bread. In the first mixing it's better if it's a little on the thick side.

See the *Sourdough Bread-Baking Ingredients* section for more details on protein percentages in common all-purpose flour brands.

MY BREAD DOUGH DIDN'T RISE.

This is much more common when you are baking your first few loaves with a new starter. You are new, the starter is new, things are still getting worked out. I have found that this is most commonly caused by a starter that just doesn't have enough lift, using more whole grain flour than the recipe called for, or a very cold house. Remediating any of those variables should fix the issue.

If your house is chilly, it might just take longer to work. Adjust the rising times as needed. If it's chilly, there's no issue with it rising longer than the recipe calls for. You can also try to warm it up by using the bread proof setting on your oven, placing it near a heating vent, or using warm water when making your dough.

HOW DO I GET PRETTY DESIGNS ON TOP?

The pretty design on top of the bread is called scoring. It helps the bread to rise. I read in a book once that cutting the top of the bread before baking "releases it from its gluten cloak." I always liked that phrase. Not only is scoring an important part of helping the bread rise while baking, it's how you can add your personal touches to your loaf of bread. It also happens to be my favorite part (after eating) about making sourdough bread. I look forward to scoring every loaf. After you turn your shaped loaf out of the basket or bowl, run your hand across the top gently to smooth and spread out any accumulated flour. If you'd like a little more flour, feel free to dust the top of the loaf lightly and spread it out with your hand. Use a razor blade or a lame (a bread slashing tool that is essentially a razor blade on a stick and about \$8 at most food supply stores) to create patterns. Cutting depth will change how it bakes up. See [page 111](#) for some scoring pattern ideas.

MY DOUGH IS STICKING TO THE INSIDE OF MY BOWL AFTER IT'S SHAPED RISE.

If you are using a bread basket for rising your shaped loaf, you'll need to season it first. You can mist it well with water and then coat it with flour. Let the flour dry before using. I use a bread basket that is lined with muslin cloth, and I seasoned the cloth in the same way. After it's seasoned, sprinkle it well with flour before using. I don't wash my basket or the fabric lining. Think of it like a cast iron skillet - that seasoning is just hanging out, making everything better. If you are using a kitchen bowl, use more oil and flour to coat the bowl better. You can also line a medium mixing bowl (about 8 inches across) with a light clean kitchen towel and dust it well with flour. It will serve the same purpose as the muslin lining on a proofing basket.

THE INSIDE (THE CRUMB) OF MY BREAD IS GUMMY.

This typically happens when the bread is underbaked or when you cut into it too soon. It's hard to wait for it to cook but letting it cool before cutting helps the crumb to set. Cutting in too soon can lead to a gummy texture.

THE CRUMB OF MY BREAD DOESN'T HAVE LOTS OF HOLES IN IT.

I know you've seen those gorgeous crumb shots on Instagram, and you want that too! My recipes don't typically have a lot of holes. The texture of the bread will be similar to a yeast bread or a thick french bread. It's soft and chewy but not typically with large holes; it'll have some but they aren't generally very large. You can get holes by changing the hydration ratio (increasing the water) and when you do that, you'll need to employ methods of stretching and folding the dough. Most recipes will have you stretch and fold the dough around 4 times at half hour increments before the bulk rise. So you'll be spending a few hours babysitting and folding your dough to add air and develop the gluten. Most of the time, you'll also want to be using a bread flour that has more gluten in it. My recipes are delicious and fun, but they are not highly technical. If you'd like to try other recipes that involve more hands on time and technique, feel free! It's so fun to try something new. I just have found that the end result isn't vastly improved enough to make me want to do that every time.

HOW DO I MAKE MY SOURDOUGH BREAD MORE SOUR?

There are two things working in your sourdough starter: natural yeast and acid-producing bacteria. You want to promote the bacteria that make the flavor more sour.

- Feed your starter whole grains, like rye or buckwheat flour; they tend to make the bacteria happy!
- Keep your sourdough starter thinner by feeding it less often. The waste that the bacteria make (like the whey in yogurt) is called hooch and it'll make your bread more sour tasting. Stir it in instead of pouring it off, and use after the starter has fallen (instead of at its peak in rise).
- Choose whole grain sourdough recipes; they'll have a more sour taste than white flour recipes. The bacteria love the minerals in the whole grains.
- Let your dough rest longer. The longer it rests, the more sour it gets. In my recipes, you'll rest your shaped loaf at room temperature for a few hours. You can also shape the loaf, cover it very well with plastic, and put it in the fridge for overnight or up to 24 hours. Just let it come to room temperature before baking. This longer, cold, second ferment will increase your sour taste significantly.
- Younger starters tend to be more mild; your starter will get more sour as it develops and ages.

HOW DO I MAKE MY SOURDOUGH BREAD MILDER?

- Feed your starter white flour (like all-purpose); less whole grains lend to a milder flavor.
- Bake bread with all-purpose white or white bread flour.
- Don't ferment or rest your dough as long. I do an 8-10 hour first rise, but then I only let it rest for another 1-2 hours after it is shaped.
- Feed your sourdough starter often, pour off any hooch that it might make, and use the starter when it is at its peak in rise.

IS SOURDOUGH HEALTHY?

The wild yeast and bacteria in the starter neutralize the phytic acid as the bread rests by adding acid to the dough. This prevents the effects of the phytic acid found in the flour and makes the bread easier to digest. This fermentation process also frees minerals, such as calcium, magnesium, iron, and zinc in the flour and makes nutrients easier for our bodies to use. Long slow fermentation of wheat can reduce phytates by up to 90%.

This is my opinion. With the help of my doctor, I've spent months healing inflammation in my stomach and intestinal lining. Sourdough products are the only grain products I can eat without having issues flare up again. I have found them much easier to digest and I don't get bloating after I eat them.

I'm not here to give any medical advice but in my experience, sourdough baking has been an amazing thing for my health. If interested, please do some further research on the topic. I also have friends who are diabetic, and sourdough bread doesn't affect them the same way commercial bread products do. While it's not a cure-all, it's certainly a fun topic to look into.

MAKING YOUR FIRST LOAF OF SOURDOUGH BREAD

The method that I use for making sourdough bread is for home bakers and busy people who love quality, delicious bread. It's a nontraditional method that I adore. So many people have found huge success making bread this way, and I can't wait for you to join the club.

Here are the basic steps and a timeline for making sourdough bread:

- Feed your active, healthy starter. This is typically done the morning before you plan on having a loaf of bread to eat (a day ahead of time).
- Mix up your dough (the night before you plan to bake the bread).
- Let the mixed dough rest for 1 hour. This is replacing making an autolyze in more formal sourdough bread-baking.
- Use your hands to work the dough into a ball. Simply pull the dough from the edge of the bowl to the center and rotate around the bowl a few times.
- Cover and let rest for 8 to 10 hours (typically overnight the day before you want to bake the bread). This is often called a "bulk rise," in sourdough-baking terms.
- The next morning, remove the dough from the bowl and shape (turn it into a ball).
- Place the shaped dough in a prepared bread basket or bowl.
- Rise a second time before baking, generally 1-2 hours.
- Score the dough.
- Bake, cool at least an hour, and ENJOY!

Basically, make the dough, rest, turn the dough, long rest, shape the dough, rest, bake, rest, eat! See? Not really hard, just some time involved. It's only about 10 minutes of hands-on time mixed with 12 to 16 hours of waiting.



BAKING SOURDOUGH BREAD USING YOUR INTUITION

Sourdough bread-baking is not as fussy as it seems and it's not as difficult as so many people have led you to believe. There's so much science in baking you can get lost there, so let's not forget about using your intuition.

Here are some things that you should know when starting out:

Recipes exist for a reason and new recipes are developed because people play with existing recipes. I'd recommend getting a feel for the dough and the rising process - what it should look like and feel like at different points in the bread-making process - and then feel free to play with it a little.

You only have a few things to play with - ingredients, temperature, and time. Altering those is how you alter the results of your bread.

Don't tell yourself you are going to fail at this before you even start. I was always so shocked and saddened at the emails that started with "*I always ruin things,*" "*I'm a terrible baker,*" or "*I'm so scared I'll kill it.*" Don't shoot yourself in the foot! Have some faith in the process and yourself; it goes a long way in something like this.

Let the sourdough schedule work for you! Don't get so caught up in the timing and numbers that you can't enjoy the process. It's ok to have some wiggle room when it comes to feeding your starter at the 24-hours mark, using your starter at its peak for baking, and the rising time. Feel free to lengthen and shorten the timing here and there so that it works for you. If anything, err on the side of longer. Sourdough yeast doesn't get spent and poo out on you like commercial yeast does. This process is more forgiving than you'd think.

Temperature will change how things work. You might think you have a perfect science down, and then summer will come and things will change. Your starter and your bread will rise faster when it's warm. As things ebb and flow through the seasons, remember that. Sourdough is a more fluid process than most baking, and it will change and evolve as you do. Don't think that changes are negative things.



HOW TO MAKE SOURDOUGH BREAD | STEP-BY-STEP



1: Start out by feeding your starter, timing it so that it's at its peak (tall in height and bubbly) when you are ready to mix up your dough. The timing of this will depend on your starter and the condition in your kitchen. Most starters are ready for use 4-12 hours after a feeding.



2: Measure out 50 grams of sourdough starter, using a kitchen scale, into a large mixing bowl.



3: Measure out your water and then use a fork to whisk and combine the sourdough starter well with the water.



4: Measure the flour into the bowl.



5: Measure the salt into the bowl.



6: Mix well with a fork until the mixture comes together. Feel free to work the dough a little with your hands to fully combine.

HOW TO MAKE SOURDOUGH BREAD | STEP-BY-STEP



7: Cover the dough with a damp towel and let it rest for about 1 hour.



8: This is what the dough looks like after it's 1 hour rest. It might look slightly looser but most likely didn't change much.



9: Working around the outside of the bowl, fold the outside of the dough into the center of the dough. Repeat turning the dough and the bowl until you've worked your way all the way around the bowl, folding the outside of the dough to the inside. Do this a time or two until a smooth ball starts to form. The dough should be much more like traditional bread dough at this point.



10: Cover the dough again with a damp towel and let the dough rest overnight at room temperature, roughly 12 hours.



11: This is what the dough should look like after it's long or bulk rise.



12: Remove the dough from the bowl it rose in, being careful to not overly deflate the dough.

HOW TO MAKE SOURDOUGH BREAD | STEP-BY-STEP



13: Shape the dough into a loose ball and let it rest on the counter for 10 minutes.



14: Shape the dough into a ball by gently pulling the ball towards you, your hands against the counter top, letting the tackiness of the dough pull against the counter to aid in your shaping. Rotate the dough a quarter turn, repeating the pulling and shaping, until you have formed a nice round ball.



15: Place the smooth ball, top side down into your proofing basket or a bowl lined with a clean dishtowel and dusted with flour.



16: Cover the basket or bowl with a damp kitchen towel and let the dough rest for 1-2 hours or until it spreads out a bit and is a bit puffy. It won't double in size.



17: This is what the dough looks like after the second rise.



18: Use a small piece of parchment paper and place it on top of the prepared dough.

HOW TO MAKE SOURDOUGH BREAD | STEP-BY-STEP



19: Gently turn the dough out onto the parchment paper.



20: Use your hands to gently spread any remaining flour on the top of the dough out.



21: Score the top of your dough with a lame, razor blade, or sharp knife.



22: Place the bread, using the parchment paper as a sling, in a large dutch oven.



23: Place the lid on the dutch oven and bake in hot oven for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and continue baking the bread, uncovered, for an additional 20-30 minutes. Remove the dutch oven from the oven and then remove the bread from the dutch oven and allow to cool on a baking rack for at least 1 hour before serving.



24: After the bread has cooled, which gives the crumb time to set, slice and serve.



Traditional Round Loaves

GO-TO SOURDOUGH CRUSTY LOAF

LIGHT WHOLE WHEAT LOAF

HONEY OAT BREAD

HERB AND CHEESE BREAD

CHOCOLATE CHIP BREAD

LIGHT RYE LOAF

RAISIN PECAN LOAF

ROASTED GARLIC AND ROSEMARY

CRANBERRY ORANGE PECAN BREAD



Traditional Round Loaves

GO-TO SOURDOUGH CRUSTY LOAF

This recipe is the first recipe that you should try if you are new to sourdough baking or if you have not found success in other sourdough bread recipes. This is a classic round loaf that is crusty on the outside and perfectly soft and chewy on the inside. When you think of sourdough bread, you probably think of this type of loaf. I love this recipe so much because it's beautiful, and it's simple.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter
350g (1 1/3 cups plus 2 tbsp) water

500g (4 cups plus 2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the flour and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
9. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
10. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
11. Let the dough rest for 1-3 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
12. Preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
13. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
14. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
15. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
16. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
17. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
18. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
19. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
20. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.



Notes

See the sourdough bread FAQ section if you have issues with bread that is too sticky and doesn't keep its shape. It's probably the flour you are using, and a few tweaks can fix it.



Traditional Round Loaves

LIGHT WHOLE WHEAT LOAF

This loaf is light and fluffy with all of the flavor of whole wheat bread without the denseness. This bread is so great next to a hearty soup or stew for dinner, and we like it best with a layer of butter and honey on a warm slice. Comfort food at its finest.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter
50g (2 tbsp) honey
350g (1 1/3 cups plus 2 tbsp) water

200g (1 2/3 cups) whole wheat flour
300g (2 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well. Add the honey, and stir to combine.
2. Add the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough, and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
9. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
10. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
11. Let the dough rest for 1-2 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
12. Preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
13. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
14. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
15. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
16. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
17. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
18. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
19. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
20. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.





Traditional Round Loaves

HONEY OAT BREAD

Not only is this loaf pretty with some rolled oats on top, but it's fluffy and hearty at the same time. It's full of the simple flavor combination of oats and honey, and it's one we love. It's great eaten warm with butter and honey on top, but also makes great toast with savory toppings on top like a fried egg or a mashed avocado with everything bagel seasoning sprinkled on top. The light sweetness goes well with many things.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter
350g (1 1/3 cups plus 2 tbsp) water
60g (2 tbsp) honey

150g (1 2/3 cups) old fashioned rolled oats
325g (2 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well. Add the honey and mix to combine.
2. Add the rolled oats, all-purpose flour, and salt and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
9. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
10. If you'd like, sprinkle the top of the dough with additional rolled oats and pat them gently into place.
11. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
12. Let the dough rest for 1-2 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
13. Preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
14. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
15. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
16. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
17. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
18. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
19. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
20. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
21. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.





Traditional Round Loaves

HERB AND CHEESE BREAD

This is such a fun bread to make, because it's colorful, and there's cheese involved! The notes have some tips and tricks on cheese and herbs to try, but I'd encourage you to try different things and come up with a few combinations of your own that you love.

That's the fun of cooking - making it your own. This loaf is so great warm out of the oven, and I love to serve it alongside homemade roasted tomato soup. It's like a grown-up grilled cheese sandwich in loaf form.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter
325g (1 1/3 cups) water
100g (3/4 cups) whole wheat flour
400g (3 1/3 cups) all-purpose flour

10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt
135g (1 very full cup) grated cheese
10g (3 tbsp) fresh finely chopped herbs

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, add the cheese and herbs to the bowl. Use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. Tuck and fold until the cheese and herbs are worked evenly into the dough.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
9. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
10. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
11. Let the dough rest for 1-2 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
12. Preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
13. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
14. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
15. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
16. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
17. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
18. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
19. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
20. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.



Notes

You have a ton of flexibility when it comes to what cheese and herbs you use. I love to use strong hard cheese for this, like aged cheddars, Romano, or Parmesan cheese. The herbs can vary with your preferences and with the seasons. A mix is generally best. I like to do chives, parsley, and dill in my loaf. Play with it, and see what you like the most!



Traditional Round Loaves

CHOCOLATE CHIP BREAD

The first time I heard of adding chocolate to sourdough bread I was skeptical; it just didn't sound great to me. I was so wrong! When you add a little chocolate to a really nice artisan bread, it's magical. A bit like enjoying chocolate croissants (Pain Au Chocolat), there's just something so delicious about the bread and chocolate combination. This recipe is one of my favorites to make for getting together with friends for morning play dates. It's perfect with a hot cup of tea, and sharing makes it even sweeter.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter
350g (1 1/3 cups plus 2 tbsp) water
100g (3/4 cup) whole wheat flour

400g (3 cups) all-purpose flour
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt
175g (1 cup) milk chocolate chips

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, add the chocolate chips to the bowl, and use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. This will evenly incorporate the chocolate chips as well.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
9. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
10. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
11. Let the dough rest for 1-2 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
12. Preheat your oven to 425°F (218°C).
13. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
14. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
15. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
16. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
17. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
18. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
19. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
20. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.



Notes

You have a lot of flexibility about the kind of chocolate you use. You can chop your own or use chocolate chips, and the chocolate can be white, dark, semi-sweet, milk, or a combination of any of those. Use what you like and what you have on hand.



Traditional Round Loaves

LIGHT RYE LOAF

Light rye is a flavorful loaf and isn't as heavy as your classic rye bread, but it has all the same robust flavor. Sourdough starters really like rye flour, so you'll have a light and fluffy rye bread easily. I love this bread with avocado toast. It's also delicious thinly sliced with a layer of cream cheese and thinly sliced salted cucumbers on top.

Ingredients

100g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter
300g (1 cup plus 2 tbsp) water
25g (1 tbsp) honey

200g (1 2/3 cups) all-purpose flour
250g (2 cups and 2 tbsp) light rye flour
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well. Add the honey and stir to combine.
2. Add the rye flour, all-purpose flour, and salt and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
9. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
10. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
11. Let the dough rest for 1-3 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
12. Preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
13. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
14. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
15. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
16. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
17. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
18. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
19. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
20. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.





Traditional Round Loaves

RAISIN PECAN LOAF

This simple loaf is a favorite for early morning toast with tea. It's crisp and chewy with just the right amount of sweet and spice and the nice texture of pecans in the middle. If you aren't a raisin fan, hear me out. You soak the raisins for an hour before adding them to the bread, and then they sit in the dough all night long. Something magical happens, and they turn into little pockets of sweetness that won't remind you of a raisin at all. I think you should trust me on this one; it's amazing and even the raisin-haters in my life agree.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter	10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt
325g (1 1/3 cups) water	75g (1/2 cup) raisins
150g (1 cup plus 2 tbsp) whole wheat flour	50g (scant 1/2 cup) chopped pecans
350g (2 2/3 cups) all-purpose flour	3g (1 tsp) ground cinnamon

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. In a second medium bowl, add the raisins and the pecans. Fill the bowl with hot water so that it covers the raisins and pecans. Let them rest in the water while the dough rises.
5. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
6. When the time has passed, drain the water from the raisins and pecans, and return them to the bowl they soaked in. Add the cinnamon to the damp raisins and nuts, and stir to combine.
7. Add the raisin mixture to the dough, and use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. Do this until the raisin mixture is evenly incorporated.
8. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
9. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
10. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
11. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
12. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
13. Let the dough rest for 1-2 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
14. Preheat your oven to 425°F (218°C).
15. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
16. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
17. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
18. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
19. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
20. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
21. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
22. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.



Notes

It's a bit of sticky work getting all of the raisins worked in. The moisture from them makes everything a little slippery. Don't be afraid to knead it well and work the dough to get everything well incorporated.



Traditional Round Loaves

ROASTED GARLIC AND ROSEMARY BREAD

Have you ever roasted a whole head of garlic? It caramelizes the garlic and makes it soft and sticky, and mellows the raw garlic flavor in the most delicious, sweet way. I love using roasted garlic in sourdough bread because the whole bread gets infused with the flavor since it sits in the dough the whole night before baking. This bread has an amazing flavor throughout each bite and is a real show-stopper.

I love making this loaf to take to friends with dinner or to serve guests at my own table.

Ingredients

1 head garlic	500g (4 cups plus 2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
Olive oil for drizzling	10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt
50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter	2g (1 tsp) dried rosemary or 4g (1 tbsp) chopped fresh rosemary
350g (1 1/3 cups plus 2 tbsp) water	

Instructions

1. Heat your oven to 400°F (205°C). Chop off the top pointed neck of the garlic (not the root end) with a very sharp knife so that you can see most of the raw cloves but they are still all together in one head of garlic. I cut about ½ inch from the top of the garlic. Place the garlic on a piece of foil that is about 10 inches wide. Drizzle a bit of olive oil over the garlic (about 2 teaspoons) and fold the garlic head up tight in the foil.
2. Place the foil-wrapped garlic in the hot oven and bake until soft, about 40 minutes. When it's done, the foil will give when pressed. This step can be done ahead of time as needed and stored covered in the fridge for up to a week.
3. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
4. Add the flour and salt and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
5. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
6. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
7. After the dough has rested, squish the garlic from its papery outer layer and into the bowl. If any of the cloves are still large, just use your hands to smash them into smaller pieces. Add the rosemary to the bowl.
8. Use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. This will also evenly incorporate the garlic and rosemary.
9. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
10. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
11. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
12. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
13. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
14. Let the dough rest for 1-3 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
15. Preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
16. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
17. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
18. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
19. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
20. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
21. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
22. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
23. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.





Traditional Round Loaves

CRANBERRY ORANGE PECAN BREAD

I love the combination of bright tart cranberries, zesty orange, and robust pecans. The flavor of the orange is light because you are only using the orange zest, but it's there just enough to make the bread unique without overpowering it. This loaf is a really fun one to make and give during the holidays as the flavor combination is so festive. It's great warm out of the oven with jam and butter on top or sliced thick and toasted well the next morning with tea.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter	75g (1/2 cup) chopped dried sweetened cranberries
350g (1 1/3 cups plus 2 tbsp) water	75g (3/4 cup) chopped pecans
150g (1 cup plus 2 tbsp) whole wheat flour	Zest from 1 large orange
350g (2 2/3 cups) all-purpose flour	
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt	

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, add the dried cranberries, pecans, and orange zest to the bowl, and use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. This will evenly incorporate the fruit and nuts as well.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 8-12 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Using your hands, cup the side of the dough farthest from you, pinkies against the counter, and gently pull the dough ball towards you, letting its grip on the counter pull it into a tighter ball. Rotate the dough slightly, and repeat around the edges until you've formed a tight ball.
9. Prepare a bread proofing basket by dusting it well with flour.
10. Place your dough ball, smooth top down, into your prepared basket, and cover with a damp towel.
11. Let the dough rest for 1-2 hours, at room temperature, or until it's spread out a bit and looks puffy. It will not double in size.
12. Preheat your oven to 425°F (218°C).
13. Gently turn your bread dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. With your hand, gently spread out any flour that has accumulated on top of the dough.
14. Score the top of the loaf in a pattern of your choosing or simply make a long slash down the middle.
15. Use the corners of the parchment paper to lift the dough into your dutch oven. Place the lid on the dutch oven.
16. Place the dutch oven in the hot oven, and cook for 30 minutes.
17. Remove the lid, and return the dutch oven to the oven, uncovered, for another 20-30 minutes.
18. When done, the bread will be dark and sound hollow when tapped.
19. Remove the pan from the oven, and then remove the bread from the pan, and let it cool on a wire rack for 1 hour before slicing and serving.
20. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of, though leftovers make great toast.



Notes

If you'd like more of an orange flavor, you can add the zest of a second orange when you add the zest of the first.
Chop up the fruit and nuts well so that they don't weigh down your dough.



Bread Pan Loaves

SIMPLE SOFT WHITE SANDWICH LOAF
CLASSIC SOFT WHEAT SANDWICH BREAD
MY FAVORITE FRUIT AND NUT LOAF
CINNAMON SWIRL BREAD
HONEY OAT SANDWICH LOAF





Bread Pan Loaves

SIMPLE SOFT WHITE SANDWICH LOAF

I love all the crusty bread, but I also love using my starter in diverse ways and having sourdough as part of our everyday diets. One of the first loaves I started playing with outside of the classic round crusty loaf was sandwich loaves. They are soft and tender and have all of the appeal of traditional yeast bread. Plus the shape and texture are more familiar to my kids, so they eat these loaves of bread a bit better than the crusty bread. This bread has a great texture and doesn't fall apart when sliced. It's great for toast, sandwiches, and warm out of the oven. There's no wrong way to eat this bread.

Ingredients

150g (very full 2/3 cup) bubbly active starter
300g (1 1/4 cup) water
15g (1 tbsp) sugar

15g (1 tbsp) light oil
500g (4 cups) all-purpose flour
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt

Instructions

1. To make the dough, measure out your starter into a medium to medium-large mixing bowl.
2. Add the water, and whisk the starter and the water together until well combined.
3. Add the sugar, oil, flour, and salt to the bowl.
4. Use a fork to combine well; it'll be a little stiff, but just mix it up well.
5. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let it rest for 1 hour.
6. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
7. After an hour, come back to the bowl, and gently pull the dough from the edge of the bowl and push it into the middle. Work your way around the bowl, pushing the dough to the center each time. Do this a few times until the dough comes together in a ball. It will look more like traditional bread dough at this point.
8. Cover the bowl again with a damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest at room temperature for 8-12 hours, depending on your schedule.
9. Prepare a loaf pan by spraying it with cooking spray or greasing well with butter.
10. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Don't punch it down or be too rough with it — it's worked for hours to rise. No need to deflate it on purpose.
11. Roll the dough into a 9 inch long log and tuck in the ends. Use your hands to gently press the loaf into an even shape, pressing along the bottom of the loaf near the work surface.
12. Place the loaf into the pan, smooth side up. I like to use an 8×4-inch loaf pan for this recipe, slightly smaller than a 9×5 loaf pan. It helps the top dome up more.
13. Cover with a damp towel, and allow to rise for 1-3 hours or until it has risen 1/2 inch or so above the rim of the pan. How quickly it rises will depend a lot on the temperature of your house.
14. While the bread is rising, preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
15. When the dough is ready, bake it for 40-45 minutes. The loaf will be a deep brown color.
16. Let the loaf rest 5 minutes in the pan, and then remove it and let it cool on a wire rack for at least an hour before cutting.
17. Store in a plastic bag for 3-5 days. It will cut best once it has cooled completely.



Notes

I love this easy loaf so much. It's our favorite sandwich bread, and it makes great toast.



Bread Pan Loaves

CLASSIC SOFT WHEAT SANDWICH BREAD

Who doesn't love soft and tender homemade wheat bread? This recipe will remind you of your favorite traditional yeast breads.

The crumb is tight but very light, and it has a spring to it that screams perfectly made bread.

This recipe makes the best grilled sandwiches and french toasts, and it's also delicious eaten warm with fresh jam.

Ingredients

150g (very full 2/3 cup) bubbly active starter
300g (1 1/4 cup) warm milk (about 90°F/32°C)
50g (2 tbsp) honey

50g (2 tbsp) light oil
250g (2 cups plus 2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
250g (2 cups plus 2 tbsp) whole wheat flour
10g (1 1/2 tps) fine sea salt

Instructions

1. To make the dough, measure out your starter into a medium to medium-large mixing bowl.
2. Add the milk, and use a fork to whisk the starter and the milk together until well combined.
3. Add the honey and oil to the bowl, and whisk to combine.
4. Add the all-purpose flour, the whole wheat flour, and salt to the bowl.
5. Use a fork to combine well; it'll be a little stiff, but just mix it up well.
6. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let it rest for 1 hour.
7. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
8. After an hour, come back to the bowl, and gently pull the edge of the dough in the bowl and push it into the middle. Work your way around the bowl, pushing the dough to the center each time. Do this a few times until the dough comes together in a ball. It will look more like traditional bread dough at this point.
9. Cover the bowl again with a damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest at room temperature for 8-12 hours, depending on your schedule.
10. Prepare a loaf pan by spraying it with cooking spray or greasing well with butter.
11. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Don't punch it down or be too rough with it — it's worked for hours to rise. No need to deflate it on purpose.
12. Roll the dough into a long log, and tuck in the ends. Use your hands to gently press the loaf into an even shape, pressing along the bottom of the loaf near the work surface.
13. Place the loaf into the pan, smooth side up. I like to use an 8×3-inch loaf pan for this recipe, slightly smaller than a 9×5 loaf pan. It helps the top dome up more.
14. Cover with a damp towel, and allow to rise for 1-3 hours or until it has risen 1/2 inch or so above the rim of the pan. How quickly it rises will depend a lot on the temperature of your house.
15. While the bread is rising, preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
16. When the dough is ready, bake it for 40-45 minutes. The loaf will be a deep brown color.
17. Let the loaf rest 5 minutes in the pan, and then remove it and let it cool on a wire rack for at least an hour before cutting.
18. Store in a plastic bag for 3-5 days. It will cut best once it has cooled completely.



Notes

You can use water in place of the milk with no issues. The milk just makes the bread a bit richer.

Feel free to use the bread pan that you have. The shape of the loaf just changes with the shape of the pan, but it won't affect anything else. A wider pan will produce a wider, shorter loaf and a narrower pan will produce a taller loaf.



Bread Pan Loaves

MY FAVORITE FRUIT AND NUT LOAF

If I were going to pick only one loaf of bread to make, besides the classic round crusty loaf, it would be this fruit and nut loaf. It's my favorite, and the one I make most often. I prefer it sliced thin and toasted very crisp. The fruit and nuts almost melt in the bread and just leave little pockets of tender sweet bites that go perfect with a layer of salted butter on top. This is one of my all-time favorite sourdough recipes. See the notes for my personal fruit and nut mix-in suggestions.

Ingredients

75g (very full 1/3 cup) bubbly active starter	500g (4 cups plus 2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
300g (1 1/4 cups) water	10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt
15g (1 tbsp) sugar	150g (3/4 cup) chopped mixed dried fruit
15 g (1 tbsp) light oil	50g (1/3 cup) chopped nuts or seeds

Instructions

1. To make the dough, measure out your starter into a medium to medium-large mixing bowl.
1. Add the water, and whisk the starter and the water together until well combined.
2. Add the sugar, oil, flour, and salt to the bowl.
3. Use a fork to combine well; it'll be a little stiff, but just mix it up well.
4. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let it rest for 1 hour.
5. In a second medium bowl, add the chopped fruit and nuts or seeds. Fill the bowl with hot water so that it covers the fruit. Let them rest in the water while the dough rises.
6. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
7. When the time has passed, drain the water from the fruit and nuts well.
8. Add the fruit and nut mixture to the dough, and use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. Do this until the fruit and nut mixture is evenly incorporated.
9. Cover the bowl again with a damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest at room temperature for 8-12 hours, depending on your schedule.
10. Prepare a loaf pan by spraying it with cooking spray or greasing well with butter.
11. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Don't punch it down or be too rough with it — it's worked for hours to rise. No need to deflate it on purpose.
12. Roll the dough into a long log, and tuck in the ends. Use your hands to gently press the loaf into an even shape, pressing along the bottom of the loaf near the work surface.
13. Place the loaf into the pan, smooth side up. I like to use an 8×3-inch loaf pan for this recipe, slightly smaller than a 9×5 loaf pan. It helps the top dome up more.
14. Cover with a damp towel, and allow to rise for 1-3 hours or until it has risen 1/2 inch or so above the rim of the pan. How quickly it rises will depend a lot on the temperature of your house.
15. While the bread is rising, preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
16. When the dough is ready, bake it for 40-45 minutes. The loaf will be a deep brown color.
17. Let the loaf rest 5 minutes in the pan, and then remove it and let it cool on a wire rack for at least an hour before cutting.
18. Store in a plastic bag for 3-5 days. It will cut best once it has cooled completely.



Notes

It's a bit of sticky work getting all of the fruit and nuts worked in. The moisture from them makes everything a little slippery. Don't be afraid to knead it well and work the dough to get everything well incorporated.

You have so many fruit and nut options for this bread! My favorite is equal parts dried apricots, dried wild blueberries, and dried tart cherries mixed with pumpkin and sunflower seeds. The possibilities are endless.

Trader Joe's has a great dried fruit selection if you live near one.

Be sure to chop the fruit and nuts evenly and into small pieces so that they don't weigh the dough down.



Bread Pan Loaves

CINNAMON SWIRL BREAD

In my opinion, cinnamon swirl bread is the short and simple version of cinnamon rolls. It has all those same great flavors without rolling and cutting out individual rolls. We love this bread sliced warm with butter, or sliced thin and toasted with butter and additional cinnamon and sugar on top for afternoon snacks. This loaf doesn't last long at my house, and I bet it won't last very long at your house either.

Ingredients

75g (very full 1/3 cup) bubbly active starter	450g (3 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour
300g (1 1/4 cup) water	10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt
15g (1 tbsp) sugar	50g (1/4 cup) sugar
15g (1 tbsp) light oil	6g (2 tsp) cinnamon
50g (1/3 cup) whole wheat flour	

Instructions

1. To make the dough, measure out your starter into a medium to medium-large mixing bowl.
2. Add the water, and whisk the starter and the water together until well combined.
3. Add the sugar, oil, whole wheat and all-purpose flour, and salt to the bowl.
4. Use a fork to combine well; it'll be a little stiff, but just mix it up well.
5. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let it rest for 1 hour.
6. After an hour, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. It will look more like traditional bread dough at this point.
7. Cover the bowl again with a damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest at room temperature for 8-12 hours, depending on your schedule.
8. Prepare a loaf pan by spraying it with cooking spray or greasing well with butter.
9. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Gently press the dough into a rectangle that is 9 inches wide and about 12 inches long.
10. Sprinkle the sugar and cinnamon evenly over the rectangle.
11. Roll up the rectangle starting on the edge that is 9 inches long, and tuck in the ends.
12. Use your hands to gently press the loaf into an even shape.
13. Place the loaf into the pan, smooth side up. I like to use an 8×3-inch loaf pan for this recipe, slightly smaller than a 9×5 loaf pan. It helps the top dome up more.
14. Cover with a damp towel, and allow to rise for 1-3 hours or until it has risen 1/2 inch or so above the rim of the pan. How quickly it rises will depend a lot on the temperature of your house.
15. While the bread is rising, preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
16. When the dough is ready, bake it for 40-45 minutes. The loaf will be a deep brown color.
17. Let the loaf rest 5 minutes in the pan, and then remove it and let it cool on a wire rack for at least an hour before cutting.
18. Store in a plastic bag for 3-5 days. It will cut best once it has cooled completely.



Notes

You can sprinkle on 50-75 grams of chocolate chips when you add the sugar and cinnamon if you like chocolate in your bread.

This bread is my kids' favorite. It's like making cinnamon rolls, but a bit less work.



Bread Pan Loaves

HONEY OAT SANDWICH LOAF

Not only is this loaf pretty with some rolled oats on top, but it's fluffy and hearty at the same time. It's full of the simple flavor combination of oats and honey, and it's one we love. It's great eaten warm with butter and honey on top, but also makes great toast with savory toppings on top like a fried egg or a mashed avocado with everything bagel seasoning sprinkled on top. The light sweetness goes well with many things.

Ingredients

75g (very full 1/3 cup) bubbly active starter	100g (3/4 cup) whole wheat flour
300g (1 1/4 cup) water	150g (1 2/3 cups) rolled oats
50g (2 tbsp) honey	250g (2 cups plus 2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
40g (3 tbsp) light oil	10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt

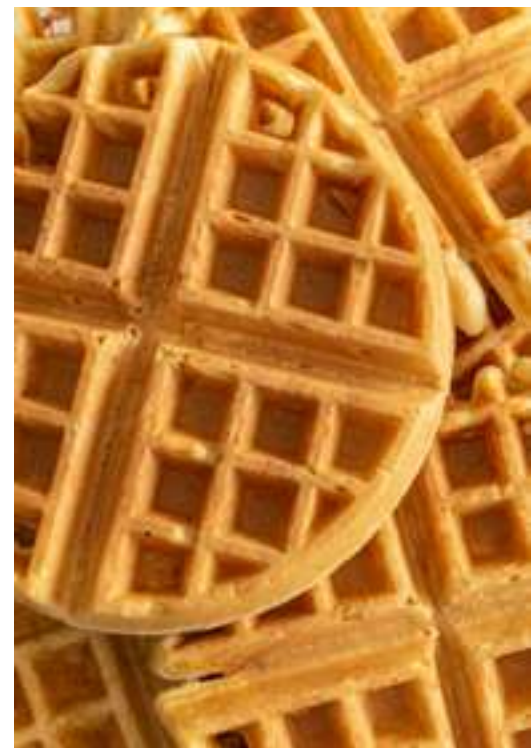
Instructions

1. To make the dough, measure out your starter into a medium to medium-large mixing bowl.
2. Add the water, and whisk the starter and the water together until well combined.
3. Add the honey and oil and mix to combine.
4. Add the whole wheat flour, rolled oats, all-purpose flour, and salt to the bowl.
5. Use a fork to combine well; it'll be a little stiff, but just mix it up well.
6. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let it rest for 1 hour.
7. After an hour, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center. It will look more like traditional bread dough at this point.
8. Cover the bowl again with a damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest at room temperature for 8-12 hours, depending on your schedule.
9. Prepare a loaf pan by spraying it with cooking spray or greasing well with butter.
10. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Don't punch it down or be too rough with it — it's worked for hours to rise. No need to deflate it on purpose.
11. Roll the dough into a long log, and tuck in the ends. Use your hands to gently press the loaf into an even shape, pressing along the bottom of the loaf near the work surface.
12. Place the loaf into the pan, smooth side up. I like to use an 8×3-inch loaf pan for this recipe, slightly smaller than a 9×5 loaf pan. It helps the top dome up more.
13. Cover with a damp towel, and allow to rise for 1-3 hours or until it has risen 1/2 inch or so above the rim of the pan. How quickly it rises will depend a lot on the temperature of your house.
14. While the bread is rising, preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
15. When the dough is ready, bake it for 40-45 minutes. The loaf will be a deep brown color.
16. Let the loaf rest 5 minutes in the pan, and then remove it and let it cool on a wire rack for at least an hour before cutting.
17. Store in a plastic bag for 3-5 days. It will cut best once it has cooled completely.



Notes

Right before you place the shaped loaf in the pan, you can sprinkle your work surface with a little additional rolled oats and then roll the smooth top of your bread on the oats so that they stick to the top and look pretty when baked.



Everyday Extras

PIZZERIA-STYLE PEPPERONI PIZZA

SIMPLE GARLICKY PIZZA SAUCE

SOFT AND TENDER DINNER ROLLS

GARLIC CHEESE BISCUITS

GARLIC KNOTS

HOMEMADE SOFT PRETZELS

LONG RISE BAGUETTES

THICK AND FLUFFY FOCACCIA

QUICK AND BUTTERY SOURDOUGH BISCUITS

HEAVENLY SOURDOUGH DONUTS

LIGHT AND FLUFFY CINNAMON ROLLS

OVERNIGHT PECAN STICKY BUNS

WEEKDAY WAFFLES

FRESH BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE MUFFINS

THICK AND FLUFFY PANCAKES

HERB AND GARLIC CRACKERS

CHEESY CRACKERS

APPLESAUCE SPICE CAKE

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE SOURDOUGH BROWNIES



PIZZERIA-STYLE PEPPERONI PIZZA

Sourdough pizza crust is one of my favorite kinds of pizza crust. It makes a crust that is light, but chewy. The dough is easy to work with and very flexible. If it needs to sit a little longer during the day, that's fine, too. There's no issue with letting this rest longer than the recipe calls for.

The baking method is a little different than some other pizza recipes, and that's what makes it pizzeria-style - it's got a fabulous texture.

Feel free to change up the toppings to suit your preferences.

Ingredients

150g (2/3 cup) active bubbly starter	300g (1 cup) pizza sauce (see page 60 for homemade sauce)
300g (1 1/4 cup) warm water	2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
500g (4 cups plus 2 tbsp) all-purpose flour	2 ounces sliced pepperoni
10g (1 1/2 tsp) fine sea salt	

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the flour and salt and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough. You can finish mixing by hand to incorporate all of the flour as needed.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center.
6. Cover the bowl with the damp kitchen towel, and allow the dough to rest for 3-6 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C). The timing here is very flexible and can work with your schedule.
7. After the dough has rested, remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured work surface and divide the dough into 4 equal parts.
8. Preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
9. You'll need a baking stone or cookie sheet to bake your pizza on. If you don't have a baking stone, you can turn your biggest cookie sheet upside down (so that the flat side is up) or use a rimless sheet. If you are using a stone, let the stone heat for 30 minutes in the oven. If using a baking sheet, let it heat for 10 minutes in the hot oven.
10. Tear off 4 pieces of parchment paper that are about 12 inches long.
11. While holding one piece of dough in two hands, gently press it between your thumbs and fingers to start forming it into a flat disc. When the dough is about 5 inches wide, place it on one piece of parchment paper.
12. Repeat with remaining pieces of dough.
13. Return to the first piece of dough, and use the tips of your fingers to gently push the dough into an even wider circle. If the dough is springing back into shape when you are trying to flatten it out, work with it for a minute, then move on to shaping the other pieces. Letting them rest a little in between shaping will make them easier to work with.
14. When all 4 crusts are about 1/4 inch thick and 8-9 inches in diameter, top them evenly with pizza sauce, mozzarella cheese, and pepperoni.
15. When the pizzas are all ready, slide one pizza, still on the parchment paper, onto a cool, rimless cookie sheet. This will help you get the pizza to the oven.
16. Slide the pizza, still on the parchment paper, from the cool cookie sheet onto the hot baking stone or sheet that's already in the oven. I just tug on the edge of the parchment paper with my hands and slide it onto the stone. Be careful not to burn yourself!
17. Bake for 10-15 minutes until the top is bubbly and the edges are starting to brown. When the pizza is done, use the parchment paper to slide the pizza back onto the cool cookie sheet. Again, be careful!
18. Repeat with remaining pizzas.
19. Slice and serve the pizza hot.



Notes

There's no issue letting this dough rise a longer time. You can let it rise in the fridge covered well with plastic up to 24 hours before you plan to use it.

I've found it's easier to make a couple of smaller pizzas than working with a larger amount of dough. Feel free to double this recipe if needed.

If you aren't up for moving the pizza in and out of the hot oven, you can simply spread out your dough on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and make your pizza on top of the baking sheet. Then place the prepared pan in the hot oven and bake - the pizza will take 5 minutes longer to cook this way.

If your baking stone is large enough, you can bake 2 pizzas at a time.



Everyday Extras

SIMPLE GARLICKY PIZZA SAUCE

Every good pizza needs a good pizza sauce, and because I know you'll now be making a lot of sourdough pizza, you'll need my favorite easy pizza sauce recipe! The ingredient list is short, and the flavor is bright and rich. This is my go-to pizza sauce recipe.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced

28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
Salt and pepper

Instructions

1. In a small saucepan, cook the oil and garlic together over medium heat until the garlic starts to smell good, about 30 seconds.
2. Add the tomatoes, and simmer until the sauce thickens a bit, about 15 minutes.
3. Season with salt and pepper to taste.



Notes

This pizza sauce freezes really well. I'll often make a double batch, and freeze it in 1 cup containers to use as needed.

Feel free to add fresh herbs or a tablespoon of Italian seasoning to the sauce if you like.



Everyday Extras

SOFT AND TENDER DINNER ROLLS

Everyone needs a simple dinner roll recipe that goes with everything. This is it! These rolls are tender and pillowy and just a little bit sweet.

These are great alongside soup or a Sunday roast, and they are perfect as a bun for mini ham and cheese sandwiches.

Dress them up or dress them down; they are delicious no matter how you enjoy them.

Ingredients

60g (1/4 cup) milk (whole or 2%)

50g (1/4 cup) sugar

56g (1/4 cup butter), cut into 4 pieces

150g (2/3 cup) active bubbly

sourdough starter

6g (1 teaspoon) salt

2 large eggs

280-320g (2 1/3 to 2 2/3 cups)

all-purpose flour

1 egg white + 1 tablespoon water

Instructions

1. Heat the milk, sugar, and butter in a small saucepan or microwave-safe container just until the milk is warm and the butter is melted. If it gets overly hot, let it cool before using. You'll want it to be only warm to the touch when adding it to your sourdough starter. If it's too hot, it'll kill your natural yeast, and your rolls won't rise. The mixture should be lower than 90°F (32°C) before adding it to the mixer.
2. Add the milk mixture to the bowl of your stand mixer, then add the sourdough starter, salt, 2 eggs, and 2 cups of flour.
3. Mix with the dough hook on low speed until the mixture forms a very wet dough, and then mix on medium-low speed to knead very well for 4-5 minutes.
4. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes in the bowl with the mixer turned off.
5. After 5 minutes, add a little more flour to the mixture, about 1/3 cup, and let the machine knead the mixture for another 4-5 minutes.
6. Turn the very soft dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand until the dough is no longer sticky, but is still very tender, adding a little flour as needed. You may add up to another 1/3 cup of flour. Form the dough into a smooth ball.
7. Lightly grease the mixing bowl, and return the dough to the bowl.
8. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel, and let it rise for 3-6 hours at room temperature.
9. Prepare a baking dish by greasing it well. You can use a 9×13-inch or two 8-inch round pie plates.
10. Gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured work surface.
11. Divide the dough into 12 equal portions (about 65 grams each). Working with one piece of dough at a time, pull it against the counter to form a smooth ball, rotating and pulling to tighten and shape the dough. This is the same method you would use to shape a round loaf of sourdough bread, just on a much smaller scale.
12. Place the shaped roll dough into the prepared pan and repeat with remaining dough.
13. Cover the pan with a damp towel and let the rolls rise in a warm spot for 1-3 hours. The rolls will spread and touch and look puffy when ready.
14. When you are ready to bake, mix together 1 egg white and 1 tablespoon water for an egg wash. Gently brush the tops of the rolls with the egg wash.
15. Bake in a 400°F (205°C) oven until the rolls are golden brown on the top and cooked through, about 15 minutes.
16. Remove from the oven and serve hot.



Notes

You can make the dough and prepare the shaped rolls the night before, and then cover them tightly with plastic wrap and let them rise overnight in the fridge after you've shaped them. Bring them to room temperature before baking in the morning. This adds quite a bit of sour flavor.



GARLIC CHEESE BISCUITS

These biscuits are such a treat! They are light and fluffy and full of cheese and garlic flavor. I love to make these savory biscuits to go with dinner or to make egg and bacon sandwiches in the morning. You don't have to use the parsley in the recipe, but I think the little pops of green really make this simple food a work of art.

Ingredients

FOR THE BISCUITS

225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or sourdough discard
80-160g (1/3 cup, plus up to 1/3 cup more as needed) milk, (I use whole or 2%)
150g (2 cups) all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt

170g (6 tablespoons) very cold butter, grated
210g (2 cups) grated sharp cheddar cheese
2 tablespoons minced parsley

FOR THE TOPPING

56g (2 tablespoons) melted butter
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon minced parsley

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C), and line a baking sheet with parchment or a baking mat.
2. In a small mixing bowl, add the sourdough starter (or discard) and 1/3 cup of milk. Whisk well with a fork to combine.
3. In a second medium mixing bowl, add the flour, baking powder, garlic powder, and salt. Stir with a fork to combine.
4. Grate the butter and the cheese into the bowl with the flour. Use a fork to combine well. Add the parsley, and stir to combine.
5. Add the milk mixture into the bowl with the flour and stir to combine.
6. Add additional milk as needed, until the dough comes together well but isn't sticky. You can work it with your hands just a little if you'd like to get the last of the flour to come together. It's better if you are working with a slightly dry dough, opposed to a wet or sticky dough.
7. When the dough mostly comes together, remove it from the bowl onto a lightly floured work surface. Knead a few times to fully combine.
8. Use a rolling pin or your hands to gently roll or pat the dough until it is 1 inch thick. Use a 3-inch circle biscuit cutter to cut the dough. Place the biscuits on the prepared baking sheet, about 1 inch apart. Gather up the dough scraps, reroll, and repeat until you've used all of the dough.
9. Bake for about 15 minutes until the tops are golden brown.
10. While the biscuits are baking, melt the additional butter in a small bowl. Stir in the garlic powder and parsley.
11. Remove the biscuits from the oven and brush the tops with the garlic butter. Let the biscuits cool for 10 minutes before serving to help set the crumb (they are a little gummy if you eat them straight out of the oven).



Notes

I like to use my mature bubbly active starter for this recipe. I think it has the best texture and flavor.

My starter is considered a 100% hydration starter because I feed it equal parts water and flour.

When I use my active starter for this recipe, I use 2/3 cup of milk total.

You are free to use your sourdough discard in this recipe. The flavor is generally more sour, and you'll need to adjust the milk to account for the texture of your discard. Often, discard is thinner than mature starter, so make adjustments as needed. You will likely need less milk.

This recipe doesn't work well for a long or overnight rising time. The baking powder will lose its leavening power over an extended time.



Everyday Extras

GARLIC KNOTS

Oh, garlic knots, why are you so fun and so tasty? My family loves when I make garlic knots; they're like the fancy version of a traditional dinner roll, and they totally love them. These garlic knots are made with a same-day schedule or an overnight schedule, whichever is easier for you to work with. You'll love their buttery, garlic flavor and how simply they come together.

Ingredients

150g (2/3 cup) bubbly active starter	6g (1 teaspoon) salt
225g (1 cup water)	10g (1 tablespoon) garlic powder, divided
25g (1 tablespoon) honey	6g (1 teaspoon) salt
70g (1/2 cup) whole wheat flour	56g (1/4 cup) butter
250g (2 cups) all-purpose flour	3g (1 tablespoon) minced parsley, optional

Instructions

1. Add starter, water, and honey to the bowl of your stand mixer. Using the dough hook, mix on low until well combined.
2. Add the whole wheat flour and 1 cup of the all-purpose flour and the salt.
3. Mix with the dough hook on low speed until the mixture forms a very wet dough, and then mix on medium-low speed to knead very well for 4-5 minutes.
4. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes in the bowl with the mixer turned off.
5. Add an additional 1 cup of all-purpose flour and 2 teaspoons of garlic powder, and let the machine knead the mixture for another 4-5 minutes.
6. Turn the soft dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand until the dough is no longer sticky, but is still very tender, adding a little flour as needed. Form the dough into a smooth ball.
7. Lightly grease the mixing bowl and return the dough to the bowl.
8. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel, and let it rise for 4-12 hours at room temperature. The timing is flexible and can work with your schedule.
9. Divide the dough into 12 equal portions (about 65 grams each). Working with one piece of dough at a time, roll it into a log that's about 6 inches long. Tie the dough in a knot like you would tie two laces together, pulling one end through a loop.
10. Place the knot on a parchment-lined baking sheet, and tuck the ends under the knot.
11. Repeat with remaining dough.
12. Cover the knots with a light towel or greased plastic wrap, and let rest for 30-90 minutes.
13. When you are ready to bake, preheat the oven to 425°F (218°C).
14. In a small bowl, melt the butter, then stir in the remaining 1 teaspoon of garlic powder and the minced parsley.
15. Before baking, brush the knots gently with the garlic butter mixture.
16. Bake for 15 minutes or until the knots are golden brown.
17. Remove from the oven, and brush them a second time with the garlic butter mixture.
18. Serve warm. If there's any garlic butter left, it makes a great dip for the warm rolls.



Notes

You can make the dough and prepare the shaped rolls the night before, and then cover the pan tightly with plastic wrap and let them rise overnight in the fridge. Bring them to room temperature before baking in the morning. This adds quite a bit of sour flavor.



HOMEMADE SOFT PRETZELS

Soft pretzels are one of our favorite foods. The kids love to help make and eat them. This is the perfect lunchtime activity to get them involved with; everyone likes to roll and shape the dough, and they definitely love to eat them. These make a great snack or a side. We normally make them for a snack and eat the whole batch!

Ingredients

150g (2/3 cup) bubbly active starter	6g (1 teaspoon) salt
225g (1 cup) water	3 quarts of water
25g (1 tablespoon) honey	100g (1/2 cup) baking soda
70g (1/2 cup) whole wheat flour	Coarse salt for sprinkling
250g (2 cups) all-purpose flour	

Instructions

1. Add starter, water, and honey to the bowl of your stand mixer. Using the dough hook, mix on low until well combined.
2. Add the whole wheat flour and 1 cup of the all-purpose flour and the salt.
3. Mix with the dough hook on low speed until the mixture forms a very wet dough, and then mix on medium-low speed to knead very well for 4-5 minutes.
4. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes in the bowl with the mixer turned off.
5. Add an additional 1 cup of all-purpose flour, and let the machine knead the mixture for another 4-5 minutes.
6. Turn the soft dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand until the dough is no longer sticky, but is still very tender, adding a little flour as needed. Form the dough into a smooth ball.
7. Lightly grease the mixing bowl and return the dough to the bowl.
8. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel, and let it rise for 2-6 hours at room temperature; the timing is flexible and can work with your schedule.
9. Divide the dough into 12 equal portions (about 65 grams each). Working with one piece of dough at a time, roll it into a long thin rope that is about 24 inches long. Shape into a pretzel and place it on a greased baking sheet (you'll need 2 sheets).
10. Repeat with remaining dough.
11. Preheat the oven to 425°F (218°C). Adjust your oven racks to accommodate two pans evenly.
12. When all of your dough has been shaped, bring the water to boil in a large pot.
13. When the water is boiling, reduce the heat so that the water simmers, and add the baking soda. Stir to combine.
14. Working with 1 or 2 pretzels at a time, place the pretzels in the boiling water, and let them boil for about 1 minute. Remove them from the boiling water (I have found that a flat slotted spatula works really well for getting them out of the water while maintaining their shape). Place the boiled pretzels on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with a bit of coarse salt while the pretzels are still wet.
15. Repeat with remaining pretzels.
16. Bake in the hot oven until the pretzels are deep brown, 12-15 minutes.
17. Remove from the oven and serve warm or at room temperature. We like them with nacho cheese dipping sauce.



Notes

If you like your pretzels soft, bake them for less time.
If you like them with a bit of crunch to the bottom, bake them longer.



Everyday Extras

LONG RISE BAGUETTES

Baguettes are fun because of their shape. I love to make these three little loaves of bread and serve them directly on the table - they are the perfect loaf to tear apart to eat in chunks. This bread is great to dip in soup or serve with salad; we love dipping them in olive oil and balsamic vinegar like you might at a restaurant, too. During the summer, I'll slice the baguettes into 1/4 inch slices and toast them in the oven and serve them with fresh garden tomato bruschetta on top. Though simple, they are really versatile and one of our favorites.

Ingredients

50g (1/4 cup) active bubbly starter
360g (1 1/2 cups) water
50g (scant 1/3 cup) whole wheat flour

425g (3 1/4 cups) all-purpose flour
10g (1 tsp) fine sea salt

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough, and you've incorporated the flour well. The dough will be wetter than other doughs; it will make the baguettes chewy and filled with holes.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 10-18 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Prepare a baking sheet by lining it with a baking mat or a piece of parchment paper.
9. Cut the dough into 3 even pieces. Working with one piece at a time, gently roll or stretch the piece of dough until it's about 12 inches long (you may need to lightly flour your hands). Rotate or twirl the bread against itself to form a twisted log. The twist is what will give it its rustic baguette shape. After twisting, the loaf will be about 14 inches long. Place it on the prepared baking sheet.
10. Repeat with remaining dough, placing each piece on the baking sheet at least an inch apart.
11. Let the dough rest for 10-15 minutes, and while it is resting, preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C).
12. When the oven is hot, place the prepared loaves in the oven, close the door, and reduce the oven temperature to 425°F (220°C).
13. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until the top has browned and the loaves sound hollow when tapped.
14. Remove the pan from the oven, and remove the bread from the pan. Let it cool on a wire rack for at least 45 minutes before serving.
15. Sourdough bread is best eaten the day of.



Notes

The shaping is definitely rustic, but I love it.
Feel free to use a bench scraper to help you work with this wet dough.



THICK AND FLUFFY FOCACCIA

This light and airy bread, thanks to a wet dough, takes on the most delicious crust and almost fried-like flavor thanks to a heavy hand of olive oil used in its preparation. The bottom crust is amazing and crispy, the center is light and chewy, and the top is golden with hints of salt.

It really is magical. Focaccia is also especially easy to make, since there are no loaves to shape. It's a very simple recipe with really amazing results. I love to serve it to guests, because it's simple but always impressive.

Ingredients

100g (1/2 cup) active bubbly starter
400g (1 2/3 cups) water
50g (scant 1/3 cup) whole wheat flour
450g (3 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour

10g (1 tsp) fine sea salt
70g (5 tablespoons) olive oil, divided
Quality flaky sea salt like Maldon

Instructions

1. Make the dough by adding the starter and the water to a large bowl. Use a fork to whisk them together well.
2. Add the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and salt, and use the fork to combine well. Stir until the mixture comes together into a rough dough and you've incorporated the flour well. The dough will be wetter than other doughs and that is ok. This will help the focaccia have more holes in the crumb and be chewier.
3. Cover the bowl with a clean, damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rest for 30-90 minutes, depending on your schedule.
4. While the dough is resting, feed your starter, and store it according to your preference.
5. After the dough has rested, use your hands to gently pull the edge of the dough from the side of the bowl and push it down into the middle of the bowl. Do this, rotating around the bowl, until the dough starts to look smooth and comes together in more of a ball. This should take about a minute of going around the bowl 4-5 times, pulling and tucking into the center.
6. Cover the bowl with your damp towel, and allow the dough to rest for 10-18 hours at room temperature, about 70°F (21°C).
7. After the bulk rise, gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Tuck the edges of the dough into the center and work around the edges until you've tucked them all in. Flip the dough ball over. Let the dough rest for 5-10 minutes.
8. Prepare a 9x13 inch baking dish by adding 3 tablespoons of olive oil to the bottom of the dish. Spread the olive oil evenly over the bottom of the dish.
9. Place the dough into your prepared baking dish. Gently pat it down a little with oiled fingers. It won't yet be ready to go to the edges of the pan.
10. Cover the pan with a damp towel, and let the dough rest for 10 minutes.
11. With oiled hands, lift up the edge of the dough and gently pull it towards the corners of the pan. Repeat with each edge of the dough. Now use your fingers to gently coax the dough to fill in the bottom of the pan. It's ok if it doesn't reach the edges yet, but it should be within an inch or so of the edges.
12. Cover the pan with a damp cloth, and allow the dough to rise a second time for 4-6 hours.
13. The dough will have spread out to fill the pan and gotten a little puffy during this time.
14. Preheat your oven to 425°F (218°C).
15. Drizzle the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil over the top of the dough. With your fingers spread, make dimples or indentations about an inch apart and an inch deep throughout the dough by gently pressing down.
16. Sprinkle the top of the dough generously with sea salt.
17. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the top and bottom have browned nicely.
18. Remove the pan from the oven, and let the bread rest in the pan for 10 minutes, and then remove the bread from the pan. Let it cool on a wire rack for at least another 10 minutes before slicing. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Notes

No Maldon sea salt? Kosher salt will work in a pinch.

This bread has a strong olive oil flavor if you are using a good strong olive oil. If you don't love that flavor, use a milder olive oil or even a lighter oil that you prefer. My kids prefer this recipe with a milder olive oil.

You can add things to the top of your focaccia. After you drizzle and dimple, feel free to dot the surface with pitted halved olives, fresh herbs, cherry tomatoes, or little chunks of cubed hard cheese.



QUICK AND BUTTERY SOURDOUGH BISCUITS

I bet you didn't know that I'm pretty much the queen of biscuits. I make killer biscuits, and I make them often. I'll make them to go with eggs, sausage gravy (the official breakfast of every holiday and birthday in our house), or soups and stews to round out a meal for my hungry brood. This recipe definitely meets my high standard for biscuits. You'll love that you can use either an active or discarded starter for this recipe.

Ingredients

225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or sourdough discard

80-160g (1/3 cup, plus up to 1/3 cup more as needed) milk, I use whole or 2%

250g (2 cups) all-purpose flour

15g (1 tablespoon) baking powder

3g (1/2 teaspoon) salt

170g (6 tablespoons) very cold butter, grated

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C), and lightly butter the bottom of the baking dish, such as a 10-inch skillet or a 7×11-inch baking dish.
2. In a small mixing bowl, add the sourdough starter (or discard) and 1/3 cup of milk. Whisk well with a fork to combine.
3. In a second medium mixing bowl, add the flour, baking powder, salt, and grated butter. Stir with a fork to combine.
4. Add the milk mixture to the bowl, and stir to combine.
5. The texture of the biscuits will depend a lot on the starter or discard that you use.
6. Adjust the dough, using additional milk as needed, until the dough comes together well but isn't sticky. You can work it with your hands just a little if you'd like to get the last of the flour to come together. It's better if you are working with a slightly dry dough, as opposed to a wet or sticky dough.
7. When the dough mostly comes together, remove it from the bowl onto a lightly floured work surface.
8. Use a rolling pin or your hands to gently roll or pat the dough into a rectangle that is roughly 6 inches by 9 inches so that the biscuit dough is about 1 inch thick.
9. Use a sharp knife to cut the biscuits into 12 pieces.
10. Place the cut biscuits into the prepared pan.
11. Bake for about 15 minutes until the tops are golden brown.
12. Remove the biscuits from the oven, and serve hot with butter and jam or with sausage gravy on top.



Notes

I like to use my mature bubbly active starter for this recipe. I think it has the best texture and flavor.

My starter is considered a 100% hydration starter because I feed it equal parts water and flour.

When I use my active starter for this recipe, I use 2/3 cup of milk total.

You are free to use your sourdough discard in this recipe. The flavor is generally more sour, and you'll need to adjust the milk to account for the texture of your discard. Discard is often thinner than mature starter, so make adjustments as needed. You will likely need less milk.

This recipe doesn't work well for a long or overnight rising time. The baking powder will lose its leavening power over an extended time.



HEAVENLY SOURDOUGH DONUTS

Donuts are one of my all-time favorite treats, and homemade ones are just as amazing as they sound. They are a little bit of work, but they are so much fun to eat. There is something magical about frying donuts at home, and they feel so festive.

We make donuts every year for our annual pumpkin picking party, and we normally fry up a batch on New Year's Day.

Feel free to add a little food coloring to the glaze to color it, or add festive sprinkles.

Ingredients

FOR THE DOUGH

60g (1/4 cup) milk (whole or 2%)

50g (1/4 cup) sugar

56g (1/4 cup butter), cut into 4 pieces

150g (2/3 cup) active bubbly sourdough starter

6g (1 teaspoon) salt

2 large eggs

280-320g (2 1/3 to 2 2/3 cups)

all-purpose flour

1 egg white + 1 tablespoon water

TO FRY

3 quarts vegetable or canola oil

FOR THE GLAZE

56g (1/4 cup) butter

225g (2 cups) powdered sugar

8g (2 teaspoons) vanilla

30-45g (2-3 tablespoons) milk

Instructions

1. Heat the milk, sugar, and butter in a small saucepan or microwave-safe container just until the milk is warm and the butter is melted. If it gets overly hot, let it cool before using. You'll want it to be only warm to the touch when adding it to your sourdough starter. If it's too hot, it'll kill your natural yeast, and your rolls won't rise.
2. Add the milk mixture to the bowl of your stand mixer, add the sourdough starter, salt, 2 eggs, and 2 cups of flour.
3. Mix with the dough hook on low speed until the mixture forms a very wet dough, and then mix on medium-low speed to knead very well for 4-5 minutes.
4. Let the dough rest for 10 minutes in the bowl with the mixer turned off.
5. Add a little more flour to the mixture, about 1/3 cup, and let the machine knead the mixture for another 4-5 minutes.
6. Turn the very soft dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand until the dough is no longer sticky, but is still very tender, adding a little flour as needed. You may add up to another 1/3 cup of flour. Form the dough into a smooth ball.
7. Lightly grease the mixing bowl, and return the dough to the bowl.
8. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel, and let it rise for 3-6 hours at room temperature.
9. Gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured work surface.
10. Roll dough so that it's 3/4 to 1/2 inch thick, adding a bit of flour as needed to prevent it from sticking.
11. Using a donut cutter or a 3 inch and a 3/4 inch circle cutter, cut out your donuts and donut holes. Place the cut out donuts on a baking sheet that is sprayed with cooking spray (you'll need 2 baking sheets), so that they are at least 1 inch apart.
12. Reroll any remaining dough, and repeat until you've cut all of the dough into donuts.
13. Cover the baking sheets with damp kitchen towels, and let them rest in a warm spot for 1-3 hours. They should be slightly puffy when ready.
14. Preheat oil in a large heavy bottomed pan or dutch oven over medium to medium high heat.
15. While the oil is heating up, make your glaze by melting the butter in a medium bowl. Add the vanilla and stir to combine. Add the powdered sugar, and stir to form a thick paste. Thin out the paste with milk, one tablespoon at a time, until the mixture is about as thick as school glue. It's ok if it's a little on the thick side; the hot donuts will melt it and it will coat them well.
16. To fry the donuts, when the oil reaches 350 to 375°F (176-190°C) (use a thermometer), carefully add the donuts to the hot oil and fry until golden brown, about 1 1/2 minutes per side. The donut holes will only take about 30 seconds per side.
17. Use a slotted spoon to remove the donuts from the hot oil, and place them on a baking sheet lined with paper towels to remove extra grease. Let them cool slightly. Dip the hot donuts in the glaze (I like to flip on both sides so it's fully covered), and enjoy right away.



Notes

You can set a wire baking rack inside of a rimmed cookie sheet and then place the glazed donuts on top of the wire rack to cool. The baking sheet will catch the drips.

These donuts don't store great. They are best eaten fresh.

These donuts won't work if you try to bake them or air-fry them - they need that instant burst of heat to make them puff up and those two cooking options don't provide that. You'll end up with flat, gummy donuts.



LIGHT AND FLUFFY CINNAMON ROLLS

Fluffy, soft, and perfectly flavored with that sourdough taste you know and love, sourdough cinnamon rolls are an irresistible treat served up with a buttercream frosting! I love this recipe, because you can make it the same day you make the dough, or you can let them rest overnight in the fridge, and bake them in the morning. They work for you, which means you can have cinnamon rolls just about anytime the craving hits.

Ingredients

FOR THE ROLLS

60g (1/4 cup) milk (whole or 2%)
50g (1/4 cup) sugar
56g (1/4 cup butter), cut into 4 pieces
150g (2/3 cup) active bubbly sourdough starter
6g (1 teaspoon) salt
2 large eggs
280-320g (2 1/3 to 2 2/3 cups) all-purpose flour

FOR THE FILLING

56g (1/4 cup) butter
110g (1/2 cup) packed brown sugar
9g (1 tablespoon) cinnamon

FOR THE ICING

56g (1/4 cup) butter
225g (2 cups) powdered sugar
8g (2 teaspoons) vanilla
30-45g (2-3 tablespoons) milk

Instructions

1. Heat the milk, sugar, and butter in a small saucepan or microwave-safe container just until the milk is warm and the butter is melted. If it gets overly hot, let it cool before using. You'll want it to be only warm to the touch when adding it to your sourdough starter. If it's too hot, it'll kill your natural yeast, and your rolls won't rise. The mixture should be lower than 90°F (32°C) before adding it to the mixture.
2. Add the milk mixture to the bowl of your stand mixer, add the sourdough starter, salt, 2 eggs, and 2 cups of flour.
3. Mix with the dough hook on low speed until the mixture forms a very wet dough, and then mix on medium-low speed to knead very well for 4-5 minutes.
4. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes in the bowl with the mixer turned off.
5. Add a little more flour to the mixture, about 1/3 cup, and let the machine knead the mixture for another 4-5 minutes.
6. Turn the very soft dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand until the dough is no longer sticky, but is still very tender, adding a little flour as needed. You may add up to another 1/3 cup of flour. Form the dough into a smooth ball.
7. Lightly grease the mixing bowl, and return the dough to the bowl.
8. Cover the dough with a damp kitchen towel, and let it rise for 3-6 hours at room temperature.
9. Prepare a baking dish by greasing it well. You can use a 9×13-inch or an 11×7-inch baking dish or even two 8-inch round pie plates. I prefer to use an 11×7-inch pan so that they cook close together.
9. Gently remove the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured work surface.
10. Roll out the dough into a rectangle that is roughly 14 inches by 18 inches.
11. If the butter you are working with isn't very soft, microwave it for just a few seconds so that it's semi-solid but very, very soft.
12. Spread the soft butter evenly over the entire rectangle of rolled out dough.
13. Sprinkle the brown sugar evenly over the butter.
14. Sprinkle the cinnamon evenly over the brown sugar.
15. Starting along the edge that is 14 inches long, roll the dough up against itself into a log.
16. Make a small mark in the dough in the middle of the log, and another mark in the center of each half (you've now roughly marked your dough into 4 sections).
17. With a serrated knife, cut each section you marked into 3 pieces, cutting the entire log into 12 even pieces.
18. Place them flat side down evenly in the pan (they fit well in a 3-by-4 pattern in the rectangle pans).
19. Cover the rolls with a damp towel, and allow to rise at room temperature for an additional 1-3 hours.
20. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C), and then bake the rolls for 20 to 25 minutes or until the tops are golden brown.
21. While the rolls are cooking, make the icing. To make the icing, add the butter to a microwave safe bowl, and microwave until melted.
22. Add the vanilla and the powdered sugar to the warm butter, and stir with a whisk to combine.
23. Add the milk a tablespoon at a time, and stir to combine. It's ok if the icing gets a little thick; just whisk it until there are no lumps and it's smooth. The icing will melt over the warm rolls.
24. When the rolls are done cooking, remove them from the oven. Allow them to rest for 5 minutes.
25. Spread the warm rolls gently with the icing to cover well. Serve warm.



Notes

The rising times can vary a lot depending on your schedule and how warm your kitchen is. Feel free to let the recipe work in your favor. Know that the longer it rises, the more sour flavor it will have.

You can make, roll, and cut the dough the night before, and then cover them tightly with plastic wrap. Let them rise for 2-4 hours before putting them overnight in the fridge after you've cut and shaped them. Bring them to room temperature before baking in the morning. This adds quite a bit of sour flavor. My starter doesn't normally rise much in the fridge, so I let them rise until they are almost ready and then put them in the fridge.



OVERNIGHT PECAN STICKY BUNS

Pecan sticky buns are breakfast perfection in my opinion. I love this recipe, because the timing has a lot of flexibility to work for your schedule.

Ingredients

FOR THE ROLLS

118g (1/2 cup) warm water
50g (1/4 cup) sugar
56g (1/4 cup) butter, cut into 4 pieces
175g (1/3 cup) active bubbly starter
6g (1 teaspoon) salt
2 eggs
280-320g (2 1/3 to 2 2/3 cups)
all-purpose flour

FOR THE STICKY PECAN LAYER

170g (3/4 cup) butter
165g (3/4 cup) brown sugar
110g (1/4 cup) light corn syrup
112g (3/4 cup) chopped pecans

FOR THE FILLING

56g (1/4 cup) butter
110g (1/2 cup) packed brown sugar
9g (1 tablespoon) cinnamon

Instructions

1. Heat the milk, sugar, and butter in a small saucepan or microwave-safe container just until the milk is warm and the butter is melted. If it gets overly hot, let it cool before using. You'll want it to be only warm to the touch when adding it to your sourdough starter. If it's too hot, it'll kill your natural yeast, and your rolls won't rise. The mixture should be lower than 90°F (32°C) before adding it to the mixture.
2. Add the milk mixture to the bowl of your stand mixer, add the sourdough starter, salt, 2 eggs, and 2 cups of flour.
3. Mix with the dough hook on low speed until the mixture forms a very wet dough, and then mix on medium-low speed to knead very well for 4-5 minutes.
4. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes in the bowl with the mixer turned off.
5. Add a little more flour to the mixture, about 1/3 cup, and let the machine knead the mixture for another 4-5 minutes.
6. Turn the very soft dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead by hand until the dough is no longer sticky, but is still very tender, adding a little flour as needed. You may add up to another 1/3 cup of flour. Form the dough into a smooth ball. The dough should be smooth and soft at this point, but not sticky.
8. Let the dough rest on the counter while you make the pecan layer.
9. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish well.
9. In a small saucepan, add the butter and the brown sugar. Heat over medium heat until the butter melts, stirring very often. When the butter melts, add the corn syrup, and stir to combine. Stir very often until the mixture starts to bubble lightly; do not bring to a full boil.
10. Remove the brown sugar mixture from the stove, and stir in the chopped pecans.
11. Pour the brown sugar mixture into the prepared pan, and set aside.
12. Roll out the dough into a rectangle that is roughly 14 inches by 18 inches.
13. If the butter you are working with isn't very soft, microwave it for just a few seconds so that it's semi-solid but very, very soft.
14. Spread the soft butter evenly over the entire rectangle of rolled out dough.
15. Sprinkle the brown sugar evenly over the butter.
16. Sprinkle the cinnamon evenly over the brown sugar.
17. Starting along the edge that is 14 inches long, roll the dough up against itself into a log.
18. Make a small mark in the dough in the middle of the log, and another mark in the center of each half (you've now roughly marked your dough into 4 sections).
19. With a serrated knife, cut each section you marked into 3 pieces, cutting the entire log into 12 even pieces.
20. Place them flat side down evenly in the pan on top of the pecan mixture (they fit well in a 3-by-4 pattern in the rectangle pans).
21. Cover the pan tightly with plastic wrap. Let the dough rise for a few hours, and then put them in the fridge, or put the pan directly in the fridge, and let it rise for a few hours in the morning, depending on your timing. If you rise in the evening and bake in the morning, let the dough rest at room temperature for 30-60 minutes before baking.
22. When you are ready, preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C), and then bake the rolls for 20-25 minutes or until the tops are golden brown.
23. When the rolls are done cooking, remove them from the oven. Allow them to rest for 2 minutes before inverting them carefully onto a serving platter (I normally serve them off of a baking sheet). Serve Warm.



Notes

Some sourdough starters and bread will still rise in the fridge. Mine does not typically rise when cold, so the rising needs to take place at room temperature before it goes into the fridge. Your starter might be different. If it rises in the fridge, you can allow your rolls to rise in the fridge.



WEEKDAY WAFFLES

This recipe is adapted from Becki, one of the three women who have nourished and fed my starter for the last 20+ years. It's the first sourdough recipe I ever tried and fell in love with. I think of my mentors every time I make these waffles. Sourdough waffles are light and airy with just the right amount of crisp on the outside. They are very quick to put together and don't need any resting time since baking soda is used as the leavening agent. They are a great quick option for weekday or weekend mornings.

You can use mature starter or discard in this recipe. They both work great.

Ingredients

**225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or
sourdough discard**
165g (2/3 cup) milk, I use whole or 2%
25g (2 tablespoons) light oil
15g (1 tablespoon) sugar

2 large eggs
85g (2/3 cup) all purpose flour
5g (1 teaspoon) baking soda
**Waffle toppings (such as, syrup, butter,
jam, or fresh berries)**

Instructions

1. Preheat your waffle iron as directed.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, add the sourdough starter, milk, oil, sugar, and eggs. Mix well.
3. Add the flour, and stir until combined. Adjust the flour or milk as needed to get the right consistency. It should be as thick as a traditional waffle or pancake batter, and your starter will play a role in the consistency.
4. Pour the batter into your waffle iron according to the manufacturer's directions.
5. When the waffle is done cooking, carefully place it on a wire rack to cool, taking care not to stack the waffles on top of each other. Repeat with remaining batter.
6. Serve waffles hot with your favorite topping, such as buttermilk syrup, fruit, or whipped cream.



Notes

This recipe is really easy to scale up if you'd like to make a larger batch of waffles. They freeze very well, and heat in a toaster nicely.

Feel free to adjust the flour or milk as needed to get a smooth batter; your starter or discard will influence the initial texture.



FRESH BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

These blueberry muffins are amazing. They'll remind you of your favorite bakery muffins, and you'll want to eat them over and over again. The texture is just right, they are sweet with pockets of warm blueberry inside, and they are fast enough to make that you can whip them up any morning for a perfect breakfast. I make these most often for afternoon snacks; they're perfect with a cup of tea!

Ingredients

225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or sourdough discard	4g (1 teaspoon) vanilla extract
85g (1/4 cup) milk	250g (2 cups) all purpose flour
56g (1/4 cup) light oil or melted butter	5g (1 teaspoon) baking soda
1 large egg	6g (1 teaspoon) fine sea salt
200g (1 cup) granulated sugar	2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen
	Sparkling sugar for dusting, optional

Instructions

1. Prepare a 12-cup muffin tin by greasing the cups well. Preheat the oven to 400°F (205°C).
2. In a large mixing bowl, add the starter or discard, milk, oil, and egg. Use a fork to whisk well to fully combine.
3. Add the sugar and vanilla, and stir well to combine.
4. Add the flour, soda, and sea salt. Stir until just combined.
5. Add the blueberries and fold into the batter.
6. Divide the batter evenly among the muffin cups. If using, sprinkle the tops with sparkling sugar.
7. Bake the muffins until the tops are golden brown and the centers cooked through, about 22-25 minutes.
8. Cool the muffins for 5 minutes in the muffin tin before removing them to cool on a wire rack. Eat warm or at room temperature.





DOUBLE CHOCOLATE MUFFINS

These muffins are thick and sweet and practically dessert. They'll rival any chocolate muffins you've bought at the store (I'm looking at you Costco muffins!), and the crowds will cheer when you pull them from the oven. This is one of our favorite recipes, and I make them often for snacks or to pack in lunchboxes. You'll love how quickly they come together.

Ingredients

225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or sourdough discard	4g (1 teaspoon) vanilla extract
85g (1/4 cup) milk	1/3 cup cocoa powder
56g (1/4 cup) light oil or melted butter	1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/4 cup sour cream or plain greek yogurt	5g (1 teaspoon) baking soda
1 large egg	6g (1 teaspoon) fine sea salt
200g (1 cup) granulated sugar	175g (1 cup) chocolate chips, divided

Instructions

1. Prepare a 12-cup muffin tin by greasing the cups well. Preheat the oven to 400°F (205°C).
2. In a large mixing bowl, add the starter or discard, milk, oil, sour cream, and egg. Use a fork to whisk well to fully combine.
3. Add the sugar and vanilla, and stir well to combine.
4. Add the cocoa, flour, soda, and sea salt. Stir until just combined.
5. Add almost all of the chocolate chips to the batter, reserving a few to sprinkle on top of the muffins before baking if desired.
6. Fold the chocolate chips into the batter.
7. Divide the batter evenly among the muffin cups. If using, sprinkle the tops of the cupcakes with reserved chocolate chips.
8. Bake the muffins until the tops are firm and the middles cooked through, about 20 minutes.
9. Cool the muffins for 5 minutes in the muffin tin before removing them to cool on a wire rack. Eat warm or at room temperature.



Notes

I'll often grease a second muffin tin and bake 24 smaller muffins for about 15 minutes instead of 12 large muffins. This makes them go farther in a bigger family and helps to reduce toddler waste when they can't finish a bigger muffin. Plus the smaller muffins fit nicely in lunch boxes.

You can use sour cream or plain greek yogurt for this recipe. I prefer to use the full fat versions. Reduced fat sour cream or plain greek yogurt leads to a muffin that is drier in texture.



THICK AND FLUFFY PANCAKES

Pancakes are an easy way to use extra sourdough starter or discard. They are quick to make and extra fluffy. This is a really standard recipe so feel free to drop in blueberries, chocolate chips, or even just a little cinnamon to change it up if you like.

Ingredients

125g (1 cup) flour	2 large eggs
14g (1 tablespoon) baking powder	15g (1 tablespoon) sugar
3g (1/2 teaspoon) fine sea salt	12g (1 tablespoon) light oil
225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or sourdough discard	Pancake toppings such as syrup, butter, jam, or fresh berries
245g (1 cup) milk	

Instructions

1. Preheat a large cast iron, or non-stick griddle or skillet, over medium heat.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, add the flour, baking powder, and salt. Whisk to combine.
3. Make a well or a bit of a hole in the center of the flour mixture with the whisk.
4. Add the sourdough starter, milk, eggs, sugar, and oil to the center of the well.
5. Using your whisk, start whisking gently in the center of the well and slowly move outward, adding more flour as you whisk until the whole bowl is well incorporated and combined. Mix well for 1 minute to get the mixture nice and fluffy.
6. The mixture should be moderately thin; adjust the milk as needed to thin out the mixture to your liking.
7. Add a bit of oil or butter to the warm pan, and use a spatula to spread it out on the bottom.
8. Using a 1/3 cup measuring cup, pour 1/3 cup of batter into the center of your pan.
9. Let the mixture cook until bubbles come through the pancake, pop, and leave a little hole behind. This will take about 1.5 to 2 minutes. When you see this, use a thin spatula to flip the pancake.
10. Let it cook an additional 1-2 minutes.
11. Remove the pancake from the pan, and place it on a wire rack set in a rimmed baking sheet. Set the baking sheet in a 200°F (93°C) oven to keep warm.
12. Repeat with remaining batter.
13. When all of the batter is cooked, serve warm pancakes with your choice of toppings such as butter, syrup, bananas, or whipped cream.





HERB AND GARLIC CRACKERS

Homemade crackers are so delicious. Until you've tried them, you just won't get it, but once you do - you'll be hooked!

Ingredients

**115g (1/2 cup) sourdough starter or
sourdough discard**
25g (2 tablespoons) light oil
30g (2 tablespoons) water
65g (1/2 cup) all purpose flour
65g (1/2 cup) whole wheat flour

6g (1 teaspoon) salt
1g (1/4 teaspoon) onion powder
1g (1/4 teaspoon) garlic powder
3g (3 teaspoons) finely minced herbs
Course salt for sprinkling

Instructions

1. In a medium mixing bowl, add the sourdough starter or discard, oil, and water. Use a fork to whisk the mixture until well combined.
2. Add the all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, salt, onion powder, and garlic powder. Stir to combine. The dough will be about as stiff as pie dough. Remove the dough from the bowl and knead it on the counter to fully incorporate all of the flour.
3. Knead in the herbs.
4. Place the dough in the bowl and let it rest. It can rest for as short as 30 minutes or as long as 8 hours; it's really flexible when it comes to timing.
5. When the dough has rested, remove it from the bowl and divide it in two. Roll one piece of the dough out with a rolling pin on a piece of parchment paper or a baking mat. Roll the dough out to 1/4-inch thickness. Gently move the parchment or baking mat onto a large baking sheet.
6. Use a pizza cutter to cut the dough into 1-1.5 inch squares. Use a fork to prick the inside of each square so that the crackers don't puff up while cooking.
7. Repeat with the remaining half of dough on another sheet of parchment or baking mat.
8. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
9. Brush the top of the crackers lightly with a little more oil or water and sprinkle evenly with coarse salt. The salt really makes them taste great, so don't be shy using it.
10. Bake until the crackers are lightly browned and crisp (they'll get crisper as they cool), about 25 minutes. Rotate the pans halfway through baking to ensure even baking.
11. Let the crackers cool, and enjoy right away or store in an air-tight container for longer storage.





Everyday Extras

CHEESY CRACKERS

Who doesn't love a classic cheese cracker? This is my kids' favorite recipe using sourdough starter discard, and it's one that we make a lot. It's a very flexible recipe, and you can change up the cheeses that you use. We generally stick with classic cheddar crackers with a bit of Parmesan mixed in for some depth of flavor. These crisp up as they cool on the pan, but that doesn't stop my family from eating them hot out of the oven. These are also a lunchbox favorite.

Ingredients

115g (1/2 cup) sourdough starter or sour-dough discard	6g (1 teaspoon) fine sea salt
25g (2 tablespoons) light oil	1g (1/4 teaspoon) garlic powder
30g (2 tablespoons) water	33g (1/3 cup) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
65g (1/2 cup) all purpose flour	100g (1 cup) freshly grated sharp cheddar cheese
65g (1/2 cup) whole wheat flour	

Instructions

1. In a medium mixing bowl, add the sourdough starter or discard, oil, and water. Use a fork to whisk the mixture until well combined.
2. Add the all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, salt, and garlic powder. Stir to combine. The dough will be about as stiff as pie dough. Remove the dough from the bowl, and knead it on the counter to fully incorporate all of the flour.
3. Knead the cheese into the dough, working it very well to combine it evenly.
4. Place the dough in the bowl, and let it rest. It can rest for 15 minutes. This will make it easier to roll out.
5. When the dough has rested, remove it from the bowl and divide it in two. Roll one piece of the dough out with a rolling pin on a piece of parchment paper or a baking mat. Roll the dough out to 1/4-inch thickness. Gently move the parchment or baking mat onto a large baking sheet.
6. Use a pizza cutter to cut the dough into 1-1.5 inch squares. Use a fork to prick the inside of each square so that the crackers don't puff up while cooking.
7. Repeat with the remaining half of dough on another sheet of parchment or baking mat.
8. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
9. Brush the top of the crackers lightly with a little more oil or water and sprinkle evenly with coarse salt. The salt really makes them taste great, so don't be shy using it.
10. Bake until the crackers are lightly browned and crisp (they'll get crisper as they cool), about 25 minutes. Rotate the pans halfway through baking to ensure even baking.
11. Let the crackers cool, and enjoy right away or store in an air-tight container for longer storage.





APPLESAUCE SPICE CAKE

We call this simple cake a snack cake. It's the perfect little treat to snack on, and it's much less work to put together. We eat it like you might eat banana bread. It's great with breakfast, a perfect after school treat, or goes well after dinner with a cup of tea. It's light and simple but full of flavor and one of our favorites to make in the fall.

Ingredients

225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or sourdough discard	10g (2 teaspoons) baking soda
61g (1/4 cup) milk	6g (1 teaspoon) salt
56g (1/4 cup) light oil	5g (2 teaspoons) ground cinnamon
1 large egg	1g (1/4 teaspoon) ground cloves
250g (1 cup) applesauce	1g (1/4 teaspoon) ground ginger
200g (1 cup) white sugar	1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
185g (1 1/2 cup) all purpose or whole wheat flour	

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C), and prepare a 9x13 inch baking dish by greasing it well.
2. In a large mixing bowl, add the starter or discard, milk, oil, and egg. Use a fork to whisk well to fully combine.
3. Add the applesauce and sugar, and stir very well to combine.
4. Sprinkle the flour over the top of the applesauce mixture. Sprinkle the baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, and nutmeg over the top of the flour.
5. Fold the flour into the wet mixture, and mix until combined.
6. Add the batter to the prepared baking dish, and smooth out the top with a spatula.
7. Bake until the cake springs back when lightly touched and a toothpick inserted into the center comes back clean, about 35 minutes.
8. Let the cake cool for 10 minutes before serving warm or serve at room temperature.



Notes

This is a definite spice cake and full of flavor. If you'd like less of that spice cake flavor, you can omit the cloves, ginger, and nutmeg, and you'll have a sweet apple cinnamon cake. My kids like it better this way, though I prefer the spiced caked version.

Feel free to dust the top with powdered sugar, serve it with sweetened whipped cream, or if you are feeling very decadent, it's great with a simple cream cheese icing.

This cake is great with either all-purpose or whole wheat flour; use what you like or have. The texture changes a bit, but I think they are both really good.



DOUBLE CHOCOLATE SOURDOUGH BROWNIES

Sourdough brownies are a really fun way to use your starter or discard; it's a bit unexpected, and you honestly can't really even tell you are baking with sourdough in this recipe. This brownie recipe makes very dense, fudgy, and thick brownies that might remind you of flourless chocolate cake. These brownies are amazing sticky and hot out of the pan with vanilla ice cream, and they are even really good cold or frozen! You can't beat a thick and fudgy brownie.

Ingredients

175g (1 cup) semi-sweet chocolate chips	8g (2 teaspoons) vanilla
15g (2 tablespoons) cocoa powder	3g (1/2 teaspoons) salt
112g (1/2 cup) butter	225g (1 cup) sourdough starter or sourdough discard
200g (1 cup) sugar	85g (2/3 cup) all purpose flour
3 eggs	

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line an 8-inch square baking pan with foil, and grease the foil and edges of the pan.
2. In a microwave-safe dish (2-cup glass measuring cup works great for this), add your chocolates, cocoa, and butter.
3. Microwave in 30 second increments, stirring after each session, for 1-3 minutes until the mixture is smooth.
4. In a large bowl, whisk the sugar, eggs, vanilla, and salt together.
5. Whisk in the melted chocolate mixture until combined.
6. Stir in the flour until just incorporated.
7. Stir in the sourdough starter or discard until just incorporated.
8. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth out the top.
9. Bake the brownies until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out with just a few soft crumbs attached, about 40 minutes.
10. Let the brownies cool completely in the pan; set on a wire rack.
11. Remove the brownies from the pan, cut into squares, and enjoy.



Notes

Use Dutch-process cocoa if you can. It makes the finished brownies nice and dark in color and gives them extra chocolate flavor.

I love a gooey, slightly under-baked brownie. Don't underbake this recipe, though. The brownies will be very moist as the recipe is. If you underbake, you'll have raw brownie in the middle.

Letting the brownies cool is the hardest part, but it makes all the difference when it comes time to cut them into squares. These brownies are very rich. Cutting the pan into 16 might seem like small portions, but a little goes a long way.



Leftover Bread Creations

SOURDOUGH FRENCH TOAST
LEFTOVER BREAD OVERNIGHT STRATA
EASY TOMATO BRUSCHETTA
LEFTOVER SOURDOUGH CROUTONS
GARLIC CROSTINI
SUMMERY CUCUMBER SANDWICH





Leftover Bread Creations

SOURDOUGH FRENCH TOAST

Making french toast out of less than fresh sourdough bread is a great way to give that stale bread a new life, plus, who doesn't like french toast? When I make french toast in the mornings, you'll often see me using an assortment of breads. It's a great way for me to clean out the bread box, and the kids never know what they'll be served.

Ingredients

1-inch thick slices of sourdough bread
3 eggs
245g (1 cup) milk

8g (2 teaspoons) vanilla extract
Cooking spray or butter for pan
Maple syrup, buttermilk syrup, butter,
whipped cream, or fresh berries for serving,

Instructions

1. Preheat a large cast iron skillet or griddle over medium heat.
2. In a wide, flat container (like a tupperware or a pie plate), add the eggs and the milk. Whisk very well with a fork to break up the eggs and combine well.
3. Add the vanilla, and whisk with a fork to combine.
4. Spray your cooking surface with cooking spray, or grease well with butter.
5. Use the fork to dip one side of the sliced bread into the egg mixture, and then quickly flip it over to coat the second side. Quickly remove from the egg mixture, and place it in the hot skillet. Repeat with a few more pieces, filling the skillet so that the pieces don't touch.
6. Let the French toast cook on one side until it is golden brown, about 2 minutes. Flip the French toast over, and cook on the other side until it is golden brown, about another 2 minutes.
7. When both sides are golden brown, remove from the skillet, and place on a wire rack set in a rimmed baking sheet. Set the baking sheet in a 200°F (93°C) oven to keep warm.
8. Repeat with remaining bread, working in batches, until all of the toast is cooked.
9. Serve the warm French toast with your choice of toppings, like butter, syrup, whipped cream, fresh berries, powdered sugar, or even jam.



Notes

Any sturdy bread will work for this recipe, feel free to use what you have on hand. It's great to use up odds and ends of homemade loaves. If my crusty loaves came out a little crusty on the bottom, I'll often cut off the bottom before making the bread into French toast. The cinnamon swirl bread makes really really good French toast.



LEFTOVER BREAD OVERNIGHT STRATA

Sometimes when I get into baking bread, I really get into baking bread! If I have an abundance of bread on my counter, turning it into this easy overnight breakfast casserole is one of my favorite ways to use it up. You can make this with just about any savory bread that you have. I like to use a sandwich loaf bread for this, but you can use what you have. Feel free to mix odds and ends of loaves too, no issue there.

Ingredients

4 heaping cups sourdough bread, torn or cut into 1-2 inch cubes	1 heaping cup deli ham, chopped
12 eggs	1/2 cup chopped green onion
3 cups half-and-half	1 1/2 teaspoon salt
6 ounces swiss cheese, shredded	1 teaspoon Dijon mustard, optional
6 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded	1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

Instructions

1. Spray the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish well with cooking spray.
2. Place the bread pieces evenly in the bottom of the dish.
3. In a large bowl, beat the eggs together well.
4. Add the half-and-half, and stir to combine.
5. Add the swiss cheese, cheddar cheese, ham, green onion, salt, mustard, and garlic powder, and stir to combine well.
6. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the bread.
7. Let the mixture rest for at least 1 hour before baking, or cover well and store in the fridge overnight.
8. To bake, uncover, and let rest at room temperature while the oven preheats. Preheat the oven to 300°F (149°C).
9. When the eggs are cooked through, remove from the oven, and let rest 5 minutes before serving. Serve hot.



Notes

You can use whole milk instead of the half-and-half if you prefer; we like the richness of the half-and-half.

Feel free to change up the types of cheese that you use to your liking. It's really flexible.



EASY TOMATO BRUSCHETTA

The simple pleasure of ripe tomatoes seasoned well with basil, olive oil, and salt and pepper all served over crusty bread is something I hope I never forget to savor. Sometimes the simplest things are the most delicious. If you don't have any leftover baguettes, feel free to thinly slice and toast any of your favorite sourdough breads. This makes the most divine summer lunch or appetizer for a simple meal.

Ingredients

**1 large vine ripe summer tomato
about 1 very full cup chopped**
**8–12 big basil leaves,
about 1/4 cup chopped**
1-2 tablespoons olive oil
2-3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste
1-2 day-old sourdough baguettes (see [page 70](#))
**Butter, softened or
additional olive oil for brushing**

Instructions

1. Place a dark baking sheet in a 400°F (205°C) oven.
2. While the oven is heating, finely dice tomato and chop basil. Combine in a small bowl.
3. Add the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir to combine.
4. Slice baguettes to 1/4-inch-thick slices, and butter one side or brush it with olive oil.
5. Place bread, butter side down, on the hot cookie sheet, and place back in the hot oven until lightly toasted, about 4-6 minutes.
6. Let the toast cool slightly, and then top it with the tomato mixture.
7. Dip extra bread in the juice puddled in the bottom of the bowl.



Notes

Be sure to not add the tomato mixture to the toast pieces until just before serving, as it will make the toasts soggy.



Leftover Bread Creations

LEFTOVER SOURDOUGH CROUTONS

I had never made homemade croutons until I got into sourdough bread-baking, and I can't believe I waited so long. I love that I can use up odds and ends of lots of kinds of breads to make croutons. It's a rare occasion when my fresh croutons are only made from one kind of homemade bread. You can eat the croutons on salad, but my kids often eat them straight off the pan for an afternoon snack. Croutons are my favorite way to breathe new life into sourdough bread that is no longer fresh.

Ingredients

4 cups sourdough bread cubes, about 1 inch each	1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon butter	1/4 teaspoon onion powder
2 tablespoons olive oil	2 tablespoons crumbled Parmesan cheese, optional
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder	

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (177°C) oven.
2. In a small bowl, add the butter and microwave until melted. Add the olive oil to the bowl and stir to combine.
3. In a second small bowl, add the garlic powder, salt, and onion powder and stir to combine well.
4. Place bread cubes in a large bowl, and pour the butter mixture over the bread cubes, making sure to distribute evenly over the cubes in a small drizzle.
5. Immediately use your hands to toss, making sure to coat each bread cube with the butter mixture. Sprinkle the herb mixture over the bread cubes, again, making sure to distribute it evenly and use your hands to coat well.
6. Spread cubes in a single layer on a baking sheet.
7. Place in your preheated oven, and cook for 10-20 minutes, stirring and flipping every 5 minutes so they cook evenly. The time is going to vary depending on the type of bread used and the size of the cubes. The croutons should be golden brown. Generally, they will take 15-20 minutes.
8. When finished, remove from the oven and immediately toss with Parmesan cheese, if desired. Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container.



Notes

Don't think that any bread is off limits here. I generally don't make croutons out of things like cinnamon swirl bread or the fruit and nut loaf, but I have made croutons out of the dinner roll recipe in this book, and they were amazing. The cheese and herb loaf also makes great croutons.



Leftover Bread Creations

GARLIC CROSTINI

These little bits of crusty toast are so tasty and so versatile. I often hope we don't eat all the baguettes I have made, just so that we can turn them into crostinis. My kids love to eat them as a side to meals, topped with bruschetta (page 104), hot off the pan right out of the oven, and on a cheeseboard.

Ingredients

1 day-old sourdough baguette (see page 70) 1-2 cloves fresh raw garlic, peeled
Butter, softened, or olive oil

Instructions

1. Place a dark baking sheet in a 400°F (177°C) oven.
2. While the oven is heating, slice baguettes to 1/4-inch-thick slices, and butter one side or brush it with olive oil.
3. Place bread, butter side down, on the hot baking sheet, and place back in the hot oven until lightly toasted, about 4-6 minutes.
4. Let the toast cool slightly. When you can handle the toast, rub the crusty side with the raw clove of garlic. Repeat with remaining slices.
5. Serve however you'd like.



Notes

You can top crostinis with so many things to make simple snacks and appetizers. We love them topped with mild, whipped goat cheese with a drizzle of honey and a pecan on top. They are also great with a slice of aged cheddar, a tiny bit of mustard, and a thinly sliced apple on top. There's no wrong way to eat a crostini!



SUMMERY CUCUMBER SANDWICH

Sometimes it's the simplest things that taste so amazing. This sandwich isn't much of a sandwich, but if it's new to you, it's definitely worth knowing about. My grandma Phillis has been making me cucumber sandwiches since I was a girl, and that's where my love of them stems from.

A fantastic piece of sourdough bread on the bottom really makes them shine. This is my go-to lunch all summer long when cucumbers are in the garden, and I can't wait for this to make it onto your plate soon.

Ingredients

2 ounces cream cheese	Salt and pepper, to taste
1 tablespoon finely chopped green onion or chives	2 slices of sourdough bread
Dash of garlic and onion powder	Thinly sliced cucumber, about 12 slices

Instructions

1. Add the cream cheese, green onion, and seasonings to a small bowl, and combine well with a fork.
2. Adjust seasoning to taste.
3. Toast your sourdough bread slices.
4. Spread 1/2 of the cream cheese mixture on the toasted bread and top with sliced cucumbers.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste, and enjoy!



Notes

For an even faster “cheater” version, you can buy the onion and chive cream cheese that’s already mixed in the tub. It’s delicious, and very easy.

The type of bread you use can depend on what you have on hand and what you like. This is great with the oat or wheat sandwich bread, and I also love it on the rye classic loaf.

SOURDOUGH SCORING



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MEET THE AUTHOR

Melissa is the founder of Bless This Mess, a popular food blog focused on helping moms create meals that are both simple and delicious for the past 10 years.

As a mother of five, she is passionate about taking the stress out of dinner so that it can be enjoyed, even by Mom. She lives in beautiful Southern Utah with her family on a hobby farm in the house of her dreams that she and her family spent years building themselves. She loves sourdough bread baking, reading chapter books out loud to the family in the evening, growing food, and hiking in the amazing mountains around her.

You can find her at:

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