

Homemade Sourdough Bread

Workshop Handout

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Sourdough Starter

Feeding Ratio: 1:1:1

Ingredient	Amount
Sourdough starter	50 grams
Water	50 grams
Whole wheat or bread flour (high protein)	50 grams

Measurements can change. Start with small amounts and add over a few days to get it very active, then use it. 200 grams of sourdough starter can yield 2 loaves. The more bread you need, the more starter you should make.

Starter Care Tips

- Keep the starter in the fridge and feed it weekly.
- If it develops liquid on the surface, it means it's hungry. Do NOT throw it away. Pour off the liquid, remove the top layer, and feed your starter.
- When ready to use, take it out of the fridge and feed it twice to make it very active.
- Float test: fill a small cup with water and place a small spoon of starter in it. If it floats, it's very active. If it sinks, it needs more time.
- The starter will also double in size. Use a rubber band to mark the level after feeding so you can track when it doubles.
- Do not cover with something solid - it needs to breathe. Use a cloth or loose-fitting cover.
- Store your starter in a clean glass or ceramic container. Avoid metal containers - the acid in the starter can react with metal.
- Don't throw your discard away! It can be used in pancakes, crackers, and other recipes.
- Measure everything with a kitchen scale. It makes a huge difference.

Sourdough Bread Recipe

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Active starter	200 grams	Must pass float test
Salt (sea salt)	20 grams	Do not use table salt
Water (room temp)	700 grams	
Whole wheat or bread flour	100 grams	Optional - can use all artisan flour
Artisan flour	900 grams	Or 1000g if skipping whole wheat

You can use 1000 grams artisan flour if you prefer, or increase the whole wheat - but you may need to add more water. The more whole wheat, the denser the bread.

Instructions

- 1. Mix:** Combine 200g active starter, 20g salt, and 750g water. Mix well. Add flour and mix until combined. It will be sticky - that's normal. Cover and let sit for 30-45 minutes.
- 2. Stretch and fold:** Wet your hands with cold water. Lift one side of the dough and stretch, repeating on all sides. Do this every 30-45 minutes, 3 times total.
- 3. Bulk ferment:** After the last stretch and fold, leave dough on the counter for 1.5 to 2 hours. Then place it in the fridge overnight.
- 4. Shape:** Remove dough from fridge. Let it sit on the counter for 30 minutes. Wet your hands, turn dough out onto a clean surface. Use a dough cutter to split into 2 parts.
- 5. Laminates:** Take one piece and carefully stretch it out on all sides without tearing (this is called laminating). It will become a triangle or square shape. Fold one side over the other, then gently pull one edge and roll it onto itself. Shape into a round ball. Repeat with the second piece.
- 6. Proof:** Place dough top-down into banneton baskets or glass bowls lined with a thin cloth. Refrigerate until dinner or overnight.
- 7. Preheat:** Heat oven to 500 degrees Fahrenheit with Dutch oven and lid inside.
- 8. Score:** Remove dough from fridge. Place onto parchment paper or a silicone mat and flip onto the counter so the top faces you. Use a blade to cut 1/4 to 1/2 inch into the dough. Start with a simple line or cross, then work up to designs. Cold dough is easier to score.
- 9. Bake:** Place in hot Dutch oven with lid. Bake covered for 30 minutes. Remove lid and bake 5-10 more minutes until desired color. The loaf is done when a thermometer placed in the center reads 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Timing may vary with elevation.
- 10. Cool:** Remove from oven and let sit 45 minutes to 1 hour. This lets the steam finish cooking the interior. Cutting too early may make the inside seem sticky or wet.

Tip: Placing pizza stones under the Dutch oven can prevent the bottom from burning. You can also fold layers of parchment paper or use two silicone mats.

Equipment You Will Need

- Kitchen scale (with gram units)
- Large mixing bowl
- Danish dough whisk (optional - you can use your hands)
- Dough cutter/scrapper
- Banneton bread proofing basket, or a bowl with a tea towel
- Dough scoring knife or blade (lame)
- Dutch oven with lid (or another oven-safe container with a tray of water for steam)
- Silicone bread sling mat or parchment paper (check temperature ratings - some parchment burns above 400 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Cover for your dough (must contain moisture - cloth, beeswax wrap, or similar)
- Cooling rack

Note: Specific brand recommendations are not included per University of California policy. Your workshop instructor can discuss equipment options during the class.

Sourdough Terminology

1. The Essentials

Starter: A living culture of wild yeast and bacteria maintained in a mixture of flour and water. It's what makes sourdough rise naturally.

Feed (or Feeding): Adding fresh flour and water to your starter to keep it alive and active.

Discard: The portion of starter you remove before feeding. Often used in recipes like pancakes or crackers.

Active Starter: A bubbly, doubled, sweetly tangy-smelling starter ready to bake with.

Whole Wheat Flour: Contains bits of the wheat husk that can look like tiny straw pieces - completely normal and natural!

2. Building Dough and Fermentation

Autolyse: A short rest after mixing flour and water (before adding starter or salt) to help gluten develop.

Bulk Fermentation: The first long rise after mixing. Yeast and bacteria build strength, gas, and flavor.

Stretch and Fold: A gentle way to strengthen dough during fermentation by pulling and folding it.

Laminating: Stretching the dough into a thin sheet and folding it to distribute gases and build structure.

Hydration: The ratio of water to flour in your recipe, expressed as a percentage.

Bench Rest: A short rest after dividing dough to relax gluten before shaping.

3. Shaping and Proofing

Pre-Shape: The rough initial shape before the final shaping.

Surface Tension: The tight "skin" formed on the dough to help it hold its shape.

Proofing (Final Fermentation): The last rise before baking.

Banneton: A basket used to support dough while proofing, creating structure and pattern.

Cold Retard: Refrigerating dough to slow fermentation - adds flavor and makes shaping easier.

4. Baking Terms

Scoring: Cutting the dough before baking to control expansion and create design.

Oven Spring: The big rise that happens in the first few minutes of baking.

Crumb: The texture inside the loaf - can be open (big holes) or tight (fine texture).

Crust: The outer layer - color, crunch, and thickness depend on steam and baking time.

Dutch Oven: A heavy pot with a lid that traps steam for a crisp crust and great oven spring.

5. Starter Care and Behavior

Mature Starter: A starter that's consistent and predictable - usually after 1-2 weeks of feedings.

Hooch: A thin grayish liquid on top of the starter when it's hungry. Stir in or pour off before feeding.

Levain: A portion of starter mixed fresh for a specific bake.

Mother Starter: The original starter you keep feeding over time.

6. Equipment and Tools

Dough Scraper: A flat tool for dividing and handling dough.

Lame: A tool with a razor for scoring dough.

Couche: A linen cloth used to proof baguette-style loaves.

7. Flavor and Texture

Acidity: The tangy flavor from fermentation.

Open Crumb: Large, irregular holes - typical of high-hydration doughs.

Tight Crumb: Small, uniform texture - perfect for sandwich loaves.

Complex Flavor: Balanced tang, sweetness, and toasty notes from slow fermentation.