

Simple Sourdough Bread

NOTE: prepare for baking a few days ahead of time, be sure your starter passes the float test, and do your best to not overthink this process. Read through the recipe at least twice. Plan on some fails, they happen to us all. Remember, it's only flour, water and salt, you got this.

100g (about ½ cup) **levain** (*sourdough that has been fed within the last 8 hours, and passes the float test*)

300g lukewarm **water** (scant 1½ cups)

50g **whole wheat flour** (about ⅓ cup)
If you don't have whole wheat, that's fine, just use all bread flour

350g **bread flour** (approximately 2¾ cups)

10g **kosher salt** (2 teaspoons or 1½ teaspoons if using table or fine sea salt)

MIX IT:

1. Mix the **levain** (starter) and **water** in a large bowl until well combined. I think your hand is the best tool for this.
2. Add the **flours** and using your hand like a claw, mix well until no lumps or dry flour remain. Cover loosely and let rest for 20 minutes.
3. After 20 minutes, sprinkle the **salt** over the hydrated dough, pinch the salt into the flour. This is how you get to know your dough. If it's feeling

tight and very resistant, add small amounts of water (sprinkle some on the dough with your hand). Until it feels nice and elastic. The dough will feel sticky. You should notice the difference in texture once the salt is added.

BULK FERMENTATION:

1. This is the time the dough sits in the bowl, and every 30-45 minutes, you do the flip and turn (see video). Rotating the bowl quarter turns. Do this for about 3-4 hours (total of 6-8 times). This allows the lovely bubbles (and flavor) to develop. At the end of this time, but gentle, you've worked hard for those bubbles!
2. The reason for the flip and turn method is to retain the flavor and fermentation of the dough. Time equals gluten development, which is the same as kneading the dough (which we are not doing, in case you haven't noticed!). I think it lends a lighter, airier dough, and it is entirely satisfying to make (and eat!)

SHAPING THE DOUGH:

Part I: The Pre-shape

1. Using a dough scraper, gently scoop the dough from the bowl onto a lightly floured surface. Do not punch down the dough, and do not add any flour to the top of the dough. Yes, it will feel very sticky, but as you shape it, but it will yield to your commands! Pull all edges into the center of the dough, forming a slightly rounded ball.

How can a nation be called great if its
bread tastes like kleenex?

Julia Child

2. Using your bench scraper, quickly flip the dough over seam side down. Cover with plastic and allow to bench rest for 10 to 30 minutes until it visibly relaxes.

Part II: The Final Shape

1. To final shape, use the bench scraper to flip the dough over onto a lightly floured surface, seam side up. Starting from the top, tuck the right side to the center, holding it in place while you bring the left side to the center overlapping with the first. Repeat this side-to-side stitching until you reach the bottom of the dough. Roll the bottom toward the center, repeating as necessary until the seam is facing down, tucking as you go to create tension.

2. Flour the top of the loaf generously. Use your bench scraper to pick up the dough and flip it over, seam side up. Cradle it into your proofing basket before covering with a cloth. Cover with plastic and place in the refrigerator to continue developing the flavor for at least 8 hours or up to 24 before baking.

THE BAKE:

Before baking: Remove your loaf from the refrigerator and let it come to room temperature for about 1-2 hours. A finger impression should stay in the dough rather than immediately bouncing back. Depending on the temp of your fridge and your kitchen, this may take more or less time to final proof before baking.

1. Preheat a Dutch oven to 480° on the middle rack for at least 20 minutes.

2. Using a sheet of parchment paper, carefully flip your loaf onto it seam side down. You can sprinkle a little flour onto the top before scoring to get a more graphic contrast, smooth away any excess.

3. Using a razor, or serrated knife score the top of the loaf ¼-inch deep to allow the loaf to fully expand and create those fun ‘ears’ while baking.

4. Using the parchment like a sling, carefully lower it into the preheated Dutch oven, pop the lid back on, and return it to the oven (*optional: to create even more steam, add a few ice cubes to the bottom of the pan before sliding the bread in*).

5. Bake with the lid on for 25 minutes. Remove the lid and lower the oven temperature to 450°. Bake for another 20 to 25 minutes until the crust is a deep golden brown or darker if desired. If you tap on the bottom of the loaf, it should sound hollow.

6. Listen to the loaf as you take it out of the oven, hear that crispy, crackly sound? That’s what it’s all about! ASMR, baby!

7. Cool on a wire rack for at least an hour before slicing into your gorgeous bread.

I promise, if you do this a few times, and expect some fails (trust me, I’ve had many) the whole concept of why this all works will start to make sense. It’s a process, not a lot of work involved, just your attention. It’s so gratifying, especially when the bread tells you it’s perfectly baked in its own crispy crackly language!

Makes 1 large sourdough loaf