

# Sourdough Bread

*This sourdough bread is based on a sourdough starter that I received from a friend about 6 years ago. We cultivated it since then, with more or less regular care and feeding, and found that it is very resilient even if you neglect it for a few weeks, as long as you keep it in the fridge. See notes below for suggestions on how to feed it.*

## Ingredients

1	1-1/3	2/3		Portions
12½ x4½ in + 5½ round	Two 12½ x4½ in	One 12½ x4½ in		Pans needed. Using 2½ in deep pans
250-400 (all you have)			mL	Sourdough starter (see notes) <sup>1</sup>
700	950	450	g	Unbleached flour
200	275	130	g	Dark rye flour
200	275	130	g	Whole wheat flour
3	4	2	tsp	Salt
1000	1330	650	mL	Warm water (preferably from the filter like Brita or under sink water system to remove chlorine). You will likely not use all of the water.
Optional:				
1/4	1/3	1/6	cup	Flax seeds
1/2	2/3	1/3	cup	Sunflower seeds
1/2	2/3	1/3	cup	Pumpkin seeds
2	3	1-1/3	tbsp	Chia seeds

Proofing and rising the dough may take long hours, even up to 12, depending on the ambient temperature, so start early in the day, or very late and bake early on the next morning.

## Recipe:

1. Transfer the starter from the jar to the mixing bowl. As it comes from the fridge, it is beneficial to let it warm up a little.
2. Weigh and mix all flour and salt in a large bowl.
3. Measure water (preferably from the filter like Brita or under sink water system to remove chlorine) warmed to about 100-105°F. You can warm it up in a microwave in a glass container – it takes about 2 minutes for one litre from room temp.
4. Start mixing the starter using a stand mixer<sup>2</sup> and flat beater at speed 2. Add about a third of the warm water and start adding the flour mix by heaping tablespoon.

<sup>1</sup> The volume of the starter is hard to measure as it depends on how bubbly it is. Generally, use all that you have in a jar. The amount will affect proofing and rising time (see Note 5).

<sup>2</sup> We use KitchenAid.

5. Once the mixture becomes dense, add another portion of water, and continue adding flour and water until you added all flour and have about 50-100 ml of water left. How much water you will need will depend on the particular brand of the flour, and whether you add optional seeds.
6. Once the dough becomes uniform and smooth stop mixing and take away some of the dough as a starter for next time. Usually, you need about 250 mL<sup>3</sup>. Place the starter in a clean glass jar so that it fills  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{2}{3}$  of it and you have some space to feed it and to allow it to bubble a little.
7. At this point you can optionally add the seeds. Replace the flat beater with the hook and continue mixing until the dough is well worked (about 10-15 minutes). Scrape the sides of the bowl if the dough or seeds stick to it.
8. You can bake the bread in baking pans<sup>4</sup> or in a Dutch<sup>5</sup> oven.
  - a. If baking in the pans, grease them, and transfer the dough into them, so that it fills them to about  $\frac{2}{3}$ . Cover with greased wax paper and then with a linen cloth to keep the fermentation heat in. It will take several hours for the dough to proof and rise. Once it is just over the top it is ready to bake at 400°F for 55 minutes. Switch the oven off, take the bread out of the pans and leave it in the oven for additional 5 minutes.
  - b. If baking in the Dutch oven, transfer the dough into another bowl (greased to avoid sticking) or into a proofing basket sprinkled with flour. Cover the container with wax paper and then with a linen cloth. It will take several hours for the dough to proof and rise to almost twice the size. When ready to bake, place the covered Dutch oven in a cold stove, and turn it on to 450°F. Once the oven reaches the temperature, take the Dutch oven out, sprinkle the bottom with flour, and place the risen dough in it. Put the lid back on, and put it back in the baking oven. Bake for 30 minutes at 450°F covered and then for 15 minutes uncovered.
9. Allow the bread to cool down before slicing.

## Notes

1. The starter should be kept in a fridge in a closed glass jar between baking sessions (390 mL jam jar is the right size). It will gradually and slowly generate some bubbles and rise over the course of several days. After a while it will start to drop. This is the time to feed it. Add to the jar 2 tbsps of dark rye flour and a little water and mix it at the top portion until the added flour forms a wet dough, then mix it thoroughly with the bottom portion until homogeneous.
2. The starter needs feeding between every 4 days to a week, but good active starter is resilient enough to survive even three weeks without feeding. It will need to be re-vitalized by feeding and allowing it to re-start, before use.
3. Do not feed the starter too often, only when it is "hungry" (starts to drop). This will make it stronger.
4. The starter should be bubbly and have somewhat sour smell. It should not smell bad, form crust on the top and definitely should not have discolorations or mold. However, active starter will not allow mold to develop.

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<sup>3</sup> You may need a little more, if you plan to bake another batch soon, otherwise the amount of the starter will grow as you feed it.

<sup>4</sup> We use a 4.5"x12.5" baking pan and a 5.5" round glass baking form 2.5" deep to accommodate the amount of dough from this recipe for 1 portion. I updated the ingredients table to show amounts for one or two 4.5"x12.5" baking pans.

<sup>5</sup> Baking in the Dutch oven keeps high humidity inside it which results in a better crust.

5. The amount to be taken out from the mixed dough in step 6 above assumes the starter will be fed 2-4 times between baking sessions. If you expect to bake more often you may take a larger portion. If you use less starter, the rise time will be extended, but the bread should still rise properly if you allow it enough time. On the other hand, if you do not bake often and feed the starter several times and it does not fit in the jar anymore, simply discard some of it before feeding.