



RECIPE: SOURDOUGH LOAF FOR BEGINNERS

Makes: 1 Loaf

Note: If you don't already have one in the fridge, you'll need to make a Sourdough Starter for this recipe which needs to be started at least 4 days before (you can find my [Rye Sourdough Starter recipe here](#)), then making the loaf itself requires 3 days (see Timing Guide below).

You will also need a spray bottle of water and an Oval Banneton Bread Basket for baking (you can buy one on bakewithjack.co.uk/shop).

Quick Timing Guide

Preparation

- Sourdough Starter in the fridge ready to be 'woken up'

Day 1

- Feed starter in the evening

Day 2

- Mix dough + 30 minutes rest
- 1st Fold (12 folds) + 2 hours rest
- 2nd Fold (6 folds) + 2 hours rest
- 3rd Fold (6 folds) + 1 hour rest
- Pre-shape + 1 hour rest
- Final shape + refrigerate overnight

Day 3

- Bake

Ingredients

Sourdough Starter

50g Wholemeal Rye Flour, plus extra for dusting

50g Water (at 35°C)

For the Loaf:

100g Sourdough Starter (taken from the excited starter above)

450g Strong White Bread Flour, plus extra for dusting

8g Salt

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310g Water (at room temperature), plus extra for spraying

Method

Feeding Your Starter (Day 1)

1. Remove your container of starter from the fridge - it doesn't matter if it only has a scraping or small amount in, you are going to add to it now.
2. Add the 50g wholemeal rye flour and 50g water to the container and mix well.
3. Scrape down the edges to level off the mixture then mark the side of the pot with a pen or elastic band to show where the mixture currently comes up to.
4. Leave at room temperature overnight (at least 8-12 hours) to bubble and increase in volume.
5. Check the next day to see where the starter now is in comparison to the mark you made - if your starter hasn't been fed in a while and is particularly 'sleepy' (not much increase), then you may need to give it a couple more feeds to wake it up.
6. If it is bubbly and has increased in volume, you're ready to make your dough.

Making the Dough (Day 2)

1. Weigh out 100g of the starter and add to a large mixing bowl (return the starter container to the fridge for next time).
2. Add the strong white flour, salt and water to the bowl and mix everything together with your dough scraper for about a minute, making sure everything is combined.
3. Leave to rest for 30 minutes.

First Fold

1. Lightly spray your work surface and the top of the dough with water.
2. Use your dough scraper to ease the dough out of the bowl onto the wet surface so it lands upside down.
3. Starting at the top of the dough (12 o'clock position), pinch the edge between your fingers and thumbs and stretch outwards (away from you) then fold it back over the dough towards the bottom (6 o'clock position) and press down. Rotate the dough slightly and repeat for about 12 turns and folds, working around the dough to form a ball.
4. Turn the dough back over, smooth side up, and return to the bowl. Spray the top lightly with water, cover with a clean cloth and leave to rest for 2 hours.

Second Fold

1. The dough should have puffed up slightly by now. Again lightly spray your work surface and the top of the dough with water and tip out the dough upside down.
2. Repeat the stretch, fold and turn process, this time for about 6 folds, again creating a ball.
3. Return to the bowl as above and rest for another 2 hours.

Third Fold

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1. The dough should clearly now be rising. Repeat exactly as for the second fold (6 turns) then leave to rest for 1 hour.

Pre-shape

1. Lightly dust the work surface with white flour.
2. Tip the dough out upside down and shape into a nice ball using the same stretch, fold and turn process as above, being quite gentle to not lose too much air but ending up with quite a tight, neat ball so keep going and neaten up by cupping the edges underneath as you need.
3. Turn the ball over so the smooth, floured side is on top. Cover with a cloth and leave to rest for 1 hour.

Final Shape

1. Lightly dust the work surface again with flour, slide your dough scraper underneath your ball of dough and turn it upside down onto the flour. Let it relax into a circle.
2. Trying to work as delicately and gently as possible with the dough, stretch out the left-hand side slightly then fold over the dough at an angle. Repeat with the other side to create a capital A shape (narrower at the top, wider at the bottom).
3. Fold over the top edge and press down gently, then continue rolling downwards towards the bottom, pressing gently after each roll, to create a tight Swiss roll shape. Pinch the seam to stick in place.
4. Dust both the dough and your banneton well with wholemeal or rye flour (or even semolina) to stop it sticking. Place the dough into the basket with the seam side facing up.

Final Rest

1. Rest uncovered in the fridge overnight.

Baking (Day 3)

1. Remove the dough from the fridge and let it come up to room temperature - it should have plumped up and inflated a bit but don't expect a huge rise.
2. Meanwhile, preheat your oven to 230°C/Fan 210°C/Gas Mark 8. Place a baking stone on the middle shelf and a deep roasting tin in the bottom.
3. Just before baking, boil the kettle.
4. Turn the loaf out of the basket out onto a floured peel or tray (upside down so the seam side is now on the bottom and the basket grooves are now on top). Make a slash top-to-bottom, just off centre, down the top of the loaf with a grigette (see Tips below) or sharp knife.
5. Carefully slide the loaf onto the hot baking stone. Pour a few centimetres of hot water from the kettle into the tin at the bottom and quickly close the door to trap steam.
6. Bake for 15 minutes then turn down the oven to 190°C/Fan 170°C/Gas Mark 5 and bake for a further 20-25 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

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Tips from me...

Useful videos relating to this recipe:

- [Bread Tip #101: Beginners Sourdough Loaf, Start to Finish](#)
- [Bread Tip #68: How to Make a Sourdough Starter](#)
- [Bread Tip #73: Sourdough: Sleepy Starter? Dead?! You've Probably Just Got Too Much](#)
- [Bread Tip #71: Sourdough - the Scrapings Method, No Waste, No Discard](#)
- [Bread Tip #55: What is a Banneton Basket?](#)
- [Bread Tip #97: Sourdough: Stop Your Dough Sticking to the Basket!](#)

This may seem like a long recipe but the processes are all really SIMPLE just spread out over a few days. As it takes a while, I often double up the recipe and make 2 loaves - one can go straight in the freezer for another day. Simply double the quantities and when you reach the pre-shape stage, divide the dough in half and shape into 2 loaves instead of one.

This is the recipe I use most so I hope it works for you too! There's no waste or discard and it's pretty flexible. You can double it up or shape the loaves as you like, and fit the timings around your days as you need to.

Lots of factors can affect your sourdough starter, so if it takes a couple of feeds to wake up, DON'T PANIC! Or if your kitchen is particularly warm, it might seem more active than normal. Take a look at my videos above for more tips on handling your temperamental starter. I use a 100% Wholemeal Rye Starter but you can use whatever starter you already have.

When folding and shaping, the trick is to be both delicate and firm at the same time - you want to create a tight shape and build tension and structure in the dough, but you don't want to knock out too much gas as this is what gives sourdough its distinctive texture. Keep practising and the more you bake, the more you'll get a feel for the dough and how to work it.

For the amount of work put into a homemade sourdough loaf, it really does pay off to have the right kit for the job. If you need dough scrapers, a grigette, banneton basket or peel you can pick them up at bakewithjack.co.uk/shop.

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