

LOAFERS

LIGHT AND MILD

If you have bought starter from Loafers, made your own, or if you have been gifted a starter/mother/biga/sourdough culture, the following can help you produce a humble loaf of naturally leavened bread.

VISIT [WEEDS & SARDINES](https://www.youtube.com/weedssardines) ON YOUTUBE FOR A STEP BY STEP VIDEO OF THIS FORMULA!!!

<https://www.youtube.com/weedssardines>

NOTES:

- This formula requires a scale, 1 small bowl, 1 large bowl, a bench knife or 4" putty knife or bench scraper
- For best baking results I suggest a Dutch oven (enamel or cast iron), combi-cooker, or baking stone with a metal bowl
- This formula is a three-day process, though active time is minimal
- When mixing, always keep one hand dry and clean
- Starter, starter refreshment, mother, sourdough, seed or any other name for it is the place where the yeast lives. Keep it warm (78-82 degrees) on the day of mixing the dough. It can be cool and move slowly on the first night of the starter feed – but this is the only time I recommend cooler temps.
- Remember, these are guidelines only – yeast acts differently in every micro climate, be patient and use online resources to help you along the way. I suggest:
 - thefreshloaf.com
 - kingarthurfLOUR.com
 - breadtopia.com
 - sfbi.com

Formula Overview

Final Dough weight: 750g

Overall Ingredient Weights:

	WEIGHT (G)
Bread Flour	383
Whole Wheat	42
Water	314
Salt	11
TOTAL	750

DAY 1 (Night – 5pm)

Starter Feed

Ingredients:

- 25g Unbleached Flour (bread or all purpose (AP))
- 25g Water
- 10g Starter (any active starter that has been maintained – it can be straight from the refrigerator)

Mix all ingredients (water first for easiest mixing) in a bowl large enough to allow this small starter feeding to double in size. Once fully mixed, this will look like pancake batter. Cover with plastic wrap and leave on the counter in a place where it will remain undisturbed overnight.

DAY 2 (Morning – 8am)

Starter Refreshment

Ingredients:

- 85g Unbleached Flour (bread or AP)
- 85g Warm water (90-95 degrees)
- 42g Starter from the night before. This should be bubbly and active. Use the extra <18g to create another starter to share with a friend.

Mix all ingredients with a spoon or by hand – this too will resemble pancake batter. Cover with plastic wrap and put in a warm space. I place mine in a microwave next to a quart of hot water. This ensures a warm and humid environment, which yeast loves.

Mixing 'Autolyse'

(mix just after mixing your refreshment)

Ingredients:

- 298g Bread Flour
- 42g Whole Wheat Flour (just use bread flour if that is all you have)
- 230g Warm Water (90 degrees)

In a bowl large enough to hold the entire dough, mix these ingredients with a spoon until it just comes together. At this point it is easier to mix with your hand. Dip your hand into a bowl of water before mixing, this will help to keep the dough from sticking to you. Mix vigorously by squeezing the dough through your fingers. Once all dry spots and most clumps are worked out, cover with plastic wrap. (This can also be done 15 minutes prior final mix though I like to mix my autolyze and starter refreshment at the same time so that I only clean dough off my hand once.)

Final Mix

If the temperature and environment are ideal, this will be 2 hours after you mixed your refreshment. You can test to see that your refreshment is ready by pinching off a piece and dropping it into a cup of water. If it floats on top of the water, it is ready to use. If it does not float, or only marginally so, put the piece back and cover the refreshment. Check back every 30 minutes until it floats.

Ingredients:

- All of your Autolyse (570g)
- 168g Starter Refreshment (remaining can be refrigerated until you choose to start the process over again)
- 11g Salt

Add 168g of *starter refreshment* to all of the *autolyse* and with a wet hand mix together until evenly incorporated. (Keep a bowl of water nearby for dipping your hand, again this help keep the dough off your hands and will make for easier mixing.) I grab the dough and squeeze between my fingers. Don't worry about damaging the gluten. It will rebuild. Once evenly incorporated (5 minutes or so), pour the 10g salt on top of the dough. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and rest for 20 minutes.

Folds

After 20 minutes, the salt should have started to leach water from the dough which makes it easier to incorporate. Once again, wet your hand and mix together until evenly incorporated. Grab and squeeze, slap and fold, by all means necessary. (Yes, you could use your Kitchen Aid.)

At this point, start a 4-hour timer.

Once completely together, with no discernable clumps of salt, autolyze, or starter, then cover and rest for 30 minutes. After that time, wet your hands and grab a side of the dough and stretch it up and over the dough. Rotate the bowl and do this 3-5 times and then cover.

Rest another 30 minutes and wet your hands and grab a side of the dough and stretch it up and over the dough. Rotate the bowl and do this 3-5 times then cover.

Repeat these folds up to 4 times every 30 minutes as needed to create a dough with a nice glossy sheen and good strength that resists more folds.

When your four-hour timer has ended, your dough should show signs of life with tiny air bubbles trapped in the gluten network throughout the dough. If this is the case, great! Time to shape. If not, give it another hour. REMEMBER, YEAST WANTS IT TO BE WARM, AT LEAST 75 degrees in the dough and air around it. If the ambient temperature is lower than 75, this will take a longer amount of time.

Shaping

Dump the dough onto a lightly floured counter and shape the dough into a ball. Watch the following videos to get a sense of the process:

[WEED & SARDINES](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtCu9hYGhOU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEG1BjWroT0> (starting at minute 3)

Place the ball seam-side down and cover with a damp towel. Rest for 20 minutes.

Line a colander with a tea towel (non-terry cloth) and flour it lightly. Again, round your dough as above and place into the lined colander with the seam-side up.

After you see some growth, between 1-3 hours, cover with a damp towel and transfer to the refrigerator to retard for 12-36 hours.

DAY 3 (Anytime)

Baking

One hour before baking: preheat oven to 500 degrees along with your Dutch-oven or stone.

After the oven has preheated for 1 hour, remove the dough from the refrigerator and invert the dough onto a piece of parchment large enough to fit the dough and have about 1" extra space around it as the dough may slack-out slightly depending on the strength of the dough and flour.

With a sharp knife, razor blade or scissors, score the loaf. A simple X, cross, or hashtag will do, though you can get creative here.

If using a Dutch oven:

Remove the Dutch oven from the oven and take off the lid. Slide your hand under the parchment and supporting as much of the dough as you can, gently drop into the Dutch oven. Be careful. She is HOT. Replace the lid and place back into the oven. Immediately reduce the oven temp to 475 degrees and set an 18-minute timer.

After 18 minutes, remove the lid from the Dutch oven and again reduce the oven temp to 450 degrees. Bake to desired color – I find a deep reddish brown is the best to ensure maximum flavor and a complete bake. This can be anywhere from 18-35 minutes depending on your oven.

If using a stone:

Slide your dough and parchment onto the stone. A rimless cookie-pan or the back of a standard sheet-pan works best. Place an inverted metal bowl over the dough. Be sure the bowl is deep enough to allow the dough to grow but small enough in diameter so that its rim rests completely on the stone. The bowl will trap steam escaping the loaf during the bake and provide the humid baking environment that best promotes maximum oven spring, loaf size, and glossy finish.

Immediately after placing the inverted bowl over the bread, close the oven door and drop the oven temp to 475. Set an 18-minute timer.

After 18 minutes, remove the bowl from the oven (I use kitchen tongs and an oven mitt in unison). Again, reduce the oven temp to 450 degrees. Bake to desired color – I find a deep reddish brown is the best to ensure maximum flavor and a complete bake. This can be anywhere from 18-35 minutes depending on your oven.

A note about ovens: All ovens act differently – even the same make and models, but they are all the same in that they provide heat. Heat is dumb. In most ovens it is a binary system – on or off. Use your intuition and nose - keep dropping your temp if you feel your loaf is baking too quickly.

Eating and Storing

After baking the bread, place it on a cooling rack and let it cool for an hour. Resist all urges to cut into the loaf until it is completely cooled. Leave the house if it helps. If you can manage this, it will ensure a longer life for your bread.

Our favorite way to store cut bread is in a Dutch oven (cooled), with the lid on it. Any pot with a lid that is large enough to hold the bread will work very well.

NOTES FOR THE NERDS

This loaf's overall baker's percentages are as follows.

Bread Flour: 90%

Whole Wheat Flour: 10%

Water: 74%

Salt: 2.5%

20% of all the flour is pre-fermented by way of the *starter refreshment*. To achieve a more open crumb, I suggest dropping the pre-fermented flour amount back by as much as 5-10%. This will elongate the process.