

Sourdough Bread Making



Start your starter

Your starter is a living thing that will grow over time. And you should keep it fed to keep it happy.

To avoid the stress of constant feeding you can a) refrigerate it to extend the time between feedings for up to a week+; b) freeze in ice cube trays then place cubes in a bag in the freezer; or c) dehydrate and store dry.

People usually name their starter to make it more personal and it is said to help it thrive.

Always use filtered lukewarm water. Once in a while I will add some rye flour to my starter.

Start your relationship with your starter by removing some from the original and putting it into a fresh jar and feeding it. Then feed the original starter, then refrigerate, freeze or dehydrate it for storage as a backup.

Feed your starter

1. Weigh a clean new jar with a lid that can fit loosely and mark the weight on a piece of tape on the jar, that way you will always know how much starter you have.
2. Put 20 g of starter into your new jar and add 50 g of flour and 50 g of water. (Sample feeding chart on page 8)
3. Stir vigorously to combine well with no dry flour clumps.
4. Cover loosely and store on the counter for a few hours before using it in a recipe or refrigerating it.
5. Note about flour: I use white flour with whole wheat or rye as an accent with a ratio of 20% of other flour.

Tools to use

- Jars with lids
- Bowls
- Measuring cups
- Kitchen scale
- Spatulas
- Scraper
- Banneton
- Dutch Oven



Make your “Levain”

A Levain is the leavening ingredient to your dough mix. It is merely a well fed and mature starter.

When you are ready to make bread, plan for the process to take about 18 hours for you to have a finished loaf.

If storing a starter in a fridge, you will need to bring it back to life by letting it come to room temperature on the counter. Feed if you need more levain than you have in your jar with some left over to keep going.

1. Remove your starter from fridge and allow it to come to room temperature
 2. In a new jar, prepare the Levain for a bread recipe:
Place 10g of starter + 50g flour + 50g water, and stir vigorously to fully combine flour with no dry flour.
 3. This amount should be enough levain for most recipes
 4. Let rest at least 1 hour and up to 12 hours on counter (You want to see it at least double in height but not rise and fall. If it falls it will start to get hungry and you will have to feed it.)
- Make sure to also feed your starter again to replenish what you removed.
 - For example, if I have about 20g left, I will add 50g flour and 50g water and mix well to combine.
 - That should give me enough to make a new levain and help it last longer.

Mix Sourdough

Some recipes call for an “Autolyse”. That is the mixture of just the flour and water for your bread that is mixed together and allowed to sit and grow for some time before adding the “Levain” and salt.

I have experimented with different methods and found that skipping the autolyse stage does not make a difference in my bread and makes the process much easier.

Let rest in a warm still area of your kitchen.

Ingredients:

400 g Flour (I use different flours, but mostly have used White Wheat – 350g and Whole Wheat – 50g) Plus flour for dusting.

300 g Water (Filtered Lukewarm –about 80°F)

12 g Salt (I use sea salt)

80 g Levain

Cornmeal to sprinkle in pot when baking

Method:

In a bowl, mix ingredients together completely. (some start with an autolyse)

Cover and let rest for 30 min - 1 hr.

Scrap away from bowl and fold over itself then turn and fold again pulling up and over without tearing it, at least 4 times.

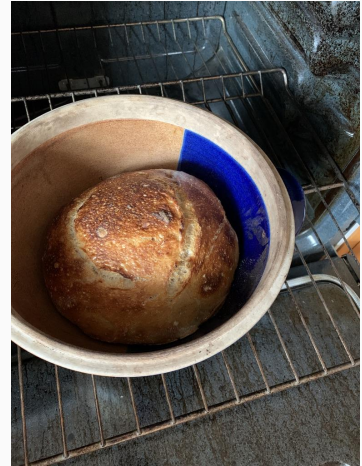
Repeat #s 2&3 for 3 more times.

Dust a clean bowl or banneton and turn dough over into the it.

After last fold and turn, roll dough into a ball with tight surface tension.

Cover and refrigerate overnight or up to 24 hours.

Mixing & Baking



Bake Sourdough



1. Place Dutch Oven and lid into oven and preheat to 500°F. (or a pot with lid like a Le Creuset or Lodge that can withstand 500°F)
2. When oven is ready, with oven mitts, take pot out of oven and sprinkle bottom with cornmeal.
3. Take dough out of fridge and flip into pot.
4. Score deeply horizontally or in a design of your choosing with sharp serrated knife or specialty blade. I make an “X”
5. Place lid on and put into oven for 20 min.
6. Remove lid and bake 15 more minutes.
7. Remove from oven and take out and let cool at least 10 min.
8. When ready, slice down the middle and open. Place half with flat middle section flat on cutting board to make more slices.

Cleanup & Tips

Clean up as you go or you will have to chip glue off your bowls and counters.

Make sure to protect your drains with a strainer.



Mess management is very important.
There are ways to avoid extra cleanup:

- Cover your scale with a plastic wrap
- Immediately soak anything that touches flour or dough.
- Use a dedicated cleaning brush and sponge for clean up.
- Use cold water to clean up.

Tips for making:

- Use grams and milliliters
- Don't worry if you are a bit off in measuring or time, contrary what information is out there, your starter is very forgiving.

Sample starter feeding chart:

20g starter gets
50g flour + 50g water
Total 120g
Remove 80g
40g left, so feed
70g flour + 70g water
Total 180g
Remove 80g
100g left, skip feeding
Remove 80g
20g left, so feed
50g flour + 50g water

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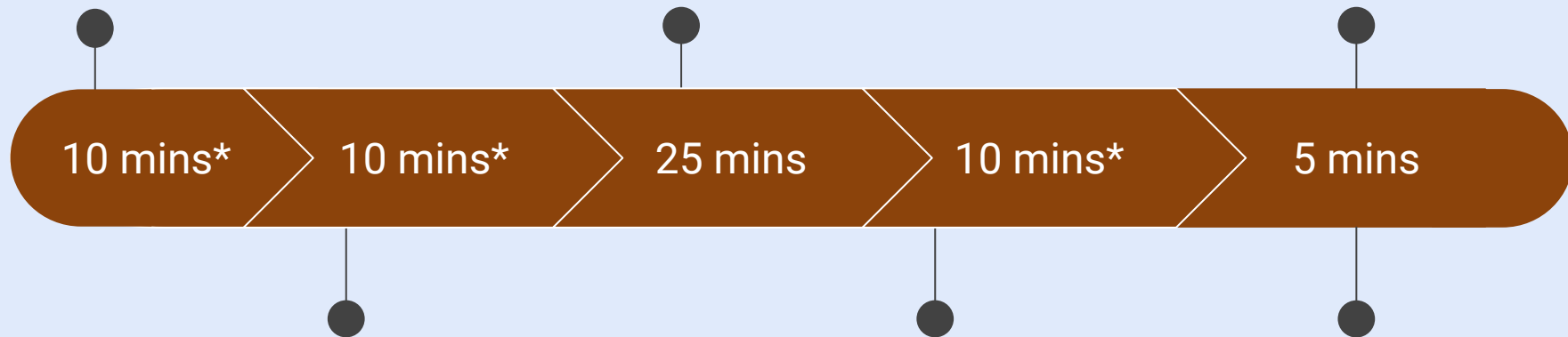
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Remove 80g
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50g flour + 50g water

About 1 hour of active time plus time for clean up. Minimum 18 hours total time from start to finish.

Make Levain and feed your starter and let grow for up to 8 hrs. Use levain in recipe and return starter to fridge.

Fold, turn, fold, turn etc, about 4 ish times then cover and let rest for 1 hr, repeat 3 more times

When ready to bake, place dutchoven pot with lid into oven and preheat to 500°F



Measure ingredients in to a bowl and mix well. Cover with towel and let rest for 1 hr.

After last fold and turn, roll to increase tension in the dough ball, flour a clean bowl or banneton, put dough in, cover and put into the fridge overnight.

Once preheated, sprinkle pot bottom with corn meal, and flip dough into pot. Quickly score with serrated knife horizontal across top, cover, and return to oven and bake for 20 min, uncover and bake for 15 min more.

* Means extra time for cleanup