

Rustic Sourdough Loaf with Homemade Butter

Recipe by Nora Allen of Mel the Bakery

Not without it's challenges, making your own sourdough bread can be incredibly meditative and rewarding. Nora Allen will take you through the entire process below, but if you have access to a friend or neighborhood bakery that is willing to give you some of their sourdough starter, you can skip straight making bread.

Making Your Own Sourdough Starter

total time: 5-7 days before "active." Continue as long as you desire | yield: 200g of starter or leaven

Ingredients:

* $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (55g) All-Purpose flour- I use Farmer Ground Flour but feel free to use whatever All-Purpose flour you have on hand

* $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (100g) Whole Wheat Glenn Blend flour from Small Valley Milling or any whole grain flour (*tip: substituting small amounts of fresh or whole grain flour really helps invigorate your culture!*)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (100g) room temperature water (75°)

Things You'll Need

Plastic or glass container with "breathable" lid, something to stir with

** Ingredients available seasonally at your neighborhood Greenmarket*

Instructions:

1. Mix water and all flours together thoroughly into a paste for 1.5 minutes. Cover loosely and place in a safe spot in your kitchen. After only a couple days, you'll begin to see "soap" like bubbles on the surface. This is wild yeast or "sourdough" bacteria!
2. On day three, discard all but **2 TBSP** of starter. Mix the same ingredients as above with the **2 TBSP** of old starter in a clean container.
3. Continue this process 2x daily for 2-3 more days for a starter that is healthy and ready to leaven bread. You'll know your starter is ripe and ready to leaven bread by conducting a "float test." Drop a small amount of starter in cool water about three hours after feeding. If it floats, it's ready to go!
4. If you wish to be making bread a few times a week, you should feed your starter **2X** a day (A.M. & P.M.) every day. If you don't have time to make bread more than once a week, you can still maintain your sourdough culture! For more occasional use, the refrigerator makes it super easy to keep your starter alive. After feeding your starter, let it sit at room temperature for an hour, then store in your refrigerator and feed **1X** a week.

Rustic Sourdough Loaf

Once your homemade “Sourdough Starter” has been regularly fed/refreshed 2x daily for 3 days, it’s time to make some bread! The first step in making a loaf is “mixing.” Feed your starter the morning of your mix, about 3-5 hours before getting started.

total time: 2 days (with plenty of non-active time) | yield: 2 small loaves or 1 big round

Ingredients

*2¾ cup (12oz) Farmer Ground Flour’s All-Purpose or Bread Flour (Farmer Ground Flour’s is a higher protein blend and will work for this recipe)

*½ cup (1.6 oz) Whole Wheat Flour (I used Small Valley Milling’s “Whole Wheat Glenn Blend” but any whole grain flour works)

½ cup (10 oz.) room temperature water

¼ cup (2oz) sourdough starter (should be ripe or pass the “float test”)

1 TBSP salt

Things you’ll need:

1 mixing bowl, 1 Pyrex or nonmetal bowl, 2 cloths to line your bowl, paring knife, bench scraper (if you have one), parchment paper, oven mitts

Instructions

Mixing

First Mix (1-2 minutes):

1. Pre-measure all of the flours, water, salt and store in separate containers. Set aside ¼ cup of water for later.
2. Mix flours and remaining water for only 1.5 minutes- just enough to hydrate the flour.
3. Cover with loose cloth and let dough relax for 30 minutes. *Fun fact: this “resting” period during the mix (before adding our starter and salt) is called an “autolyse.”*

Final mix (6 minutes):

1. Uncover your mix and slowly add ¼ cup of remaining water to dough while pulling, kneading, and developing dough strength. Keep mixing until the dough pulls up all the water. This should take about 2 minutes.
2. Add the “sourdough culture,” again, kneading and mixing for about 2 minutes or until the dough pulls it all up.
3. Add salt and mix for 2 minutes.
4. Transfer dough into a non-metal container. Mark container with tape about ¼ inch above dough. This mark helps us keep track of proofing. Let rise or bulk ferment for 4-4.5 hours. If you have a thermometer, feel free to check your dough’s internal temperature. The “desired dough temperature” for fermentation in this formula is 76°.

Divide and Shape

1. After your dough has bulked and proofed for several hours, it’s time to pre shape. Gently pour dough out of the container onto a surface that you’ve lightly dusted with all-purpose flour. This will help prevent stickiness and dough stress. You want to use just enough flour to prevent sticking, as too much will cause pockets of raw flour in the dough and mess up the crumb.
2. Pull/rotate dough into a tight round. Cover with a loose cloth and let rest for 30 minutes
3. Prepare a Pyrex bowl or any non-metal bowl with a lightly floured cloth/ kitchen rag/ towel lining the inside (*tip: bread baskets or bannetons really help improve the final*



shape of your loaf. If you like making bread, invest in one! Or drop hints to loved ones.)

4. After your pre-shaped dough has rested for 30 minute, it is time for final shaping. Flip the dough over and pull up each of the four sides of the dough into the middle, overlapping a bit, aiming to create a somewhat tightly, yet gently knit ball of dough.
5. Transfer the bottom, or the “seam” side, of the loaf facing up into the prepared cloth lined, “non-metal” bowl or banneton.
6. Cover with a clean rag/cloth. Proof for roughly 2 hours at room temperature (or until it holds a finger impression).
7. After 2 hours, carefully place your proofed loaf in the refrigerator to ferment overnight (*tip: the length of time sourdough should ferment depends on many factors namely: types of flours in the mix, temperature, % of starter, and % of water in the dough*).

Scoring and baking

1. The following day, preheat oven to 465°.
2. Carefully place a dutch oven (or lidded ovenproof vessel) in the oven. Preheat in oven for a 1 hour minimum (*tip: a dutch oven is the easiest way to bake sourdough at home because the lid is self-steaming. Steam is essential for crust development. Pizza stones, and any cast iron work too! You just need to make your own steaming apparatus*).
3. Once your baking set up is hot, pull your shaped loaf out of the refrigerator.
4. With a sheet of parchment paper ready, lightly flour and flip your loaf carefully onto it.
5. Remove the hot dutch oven from the oven and prepare to load.
6. Use a paring knife or scissors to score or cut a “#” by lightly slicing over the surface of the loaf.
7. Grab both sides of the parchment to lift the loaf into the dutch oven.
8. Using oven mitts or welding gloves. Place the lid on the dutch oven with the loaf inside as quickly and safely as possible. This is important for getting a well-steamed, good crust.
9. Return the dutch oven to the 465° oven. Bake for 40 minutes.
10. After 40 minutes, turn the oven down to 410° and remove the lid of the dutch oven.
11. Bake for additional 4 minutes (for color) also important for releasing the steam contained in the dutch oven. Always finish sourdough in a “dry” oven.
12. Allow an hour for cooling (if you can resist). Cut & enjoy!



Fresh Butter

total time: 1 hour | yield: 1 # of fresh butter

Ingredients

*1 pint (500g) room temperature high-fat heavy cream (half & half won't work)

*1 tsp (6g) salt

Things you'll need:

2 clean "Mason Jars" (16 ounces each), a bowl, a measuring cup full of fresh cold tap water

Instructions

1. Pull cream out to "temper" at room temperature about an hour before you plan on churning. Tempering helps make the process a little faster.
2. Split cream evenly between the two "Mason Jars." Secure the lids and begin to shake cream in the jars. Shake jars for 3 minutes and check your progress. You will feel the jar get heavier as the cream whips. 2 more minutes of shaking the whipped cream will make butter! Shake until you see/feel the cream "break" and can see a curd (butter) floating in buttermilk (whey).
3. Strain, save, and store fresh buttermilk. Wash butter in a bowl pouring cold water over the curd. Keep pouring fresh cold water over it, discarding any murky water. Once the water around the butter is clear, your butter is clean. Slap to dry it. Then fold the teaspoon of salt into the clean butter. Enjoy.