



Sourdough Bread- Yields 2 loaves

Step #3- Basic Sourdough Bread- takes 3 days

(The third step in making sourdough bread)

([See step #1 Seed Culture](#))

([See step #2 Barm](#))

Ingredients:

Firm starter

2/3 cup (4oz) [barm](#)

1 cup (4 1/2oz) unbleached high-gluten or bread flour

1/8 to 1/4 cup (1-2oz) water, room temperature

Final dough

4 1/2 cups (20 1/4oz) unbleached high-gluten or bread flour

2 t (1/2oz) salt

1 1/2 to 1 3/4 cups (12-14oz) lukewarm water (90-100°F)

Semolina flour or cornmeal for dusting

Steps

1. Remove the barm from the refrigerator and measure it out 1 hour before making the firm starter to take off the chill. To do this, dip a 2/3-cup measuring cup into a bowl of water, then scoop it into the barm to fill (the wet cup will allow the barm to slide out easily). Transfer it to a small bowl, cover with a towel or plastic wrap, and allow it to warm up for 1 hour.
2. Add the flour to the bowl and mix together the barm and the flour, adding only enough additional water so that you can knead this into a small ball. You do not need to work this very long, just until all the flour is hydrated and the barm is evenly distributed. Lightly oil a small bowl or mist the inside of a plastic bag with spray oil, and place the starter in the bowl or bag, turning to coat it with oil. Cover the bowl or seal the bag.
3. Ferment at room temperature for approximately 4 hours, or until the starter has at least doubled in size. If it takes more time than 4 hours, give it additional time, checking every hour or so. Then put it in the refrigerator overnight.
4. Remove the starter from the refrigerator 1 hour before making the dough. Cut it into about 10 small pieces with a pastry scraper or serrated knife. Mist with spray oil, cover with a towel or plastic wrap, and let sit for 1 hour to take off the chill.
5. To make the dough, stir together the flour and salt in a 4-quart mixing bowl (or in the bowl of an electric mixer). Add the starter pieces and enough water to bring everything together into a ball as you stir with a large metal spoon (or mix on low speed with the paddle attachment).
6. Sprinkle the counter with flour, transfer the dough to the counter, and knead by hand for 12 to 15 minutes (or mix with the dough hook for 4 minutes on medium-low speed, allow the dough to rest



for 5 to 10 minutes, and then mix for 4 minutes). Adjust the water or flour as needed. The dough should be firm but tacky. Lightly oil a large bowl and transfer the dough to the bowl, rolling it around to coat it with oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap.

7. Ferment at room temperature for 3 to 4 hours, or until the dough has nearly doubled in size.
8. Gently remove the dough from the bowl and divide it into 2 equal pieces (about 22 ounces each), or divide it into smaller pieces if you are making rolls. Gently shape the dough into round or oblong shapes.
9. Proof the dough on parchment-lined sheet pans that have been dusted with semolina flour or cornmeal. Mist the exposed part of the dough with spray oil and loosely cover the dough with a towel or plastic wrap. Proof the loaves for 2 to 3 hours.
10. Prepare the oven for hearth baking by placing a large cast-iron pan or heavy-duty baking pan on the top rack. Preheat the oven to 500 degrees.
11. Ten minutes before baking, remove the towel or plastic wrap from the loaves. Generously dust a baking peel or the back of a sheet pan with semolina flour or cornmeal, and gently transfer the dough to the peel or pan. (If dough was proofed in a sheet pan, it can be baked directly in that pan.) Score the dough and slide it onto a baking stone (or leave it in the sheet pan) and place it in the oven.
12. Pour 1 cup hot water into the cast-iron or heavy-duty baking pan on the top oven rack and close the oven door. After 30 seconds, spray the oven walls with water and close the door. Repeat twice more at 30-second intervals.
13. After the final spray, lower the oven setting to 450 degrees and bake for 10 minutes. Rotate the loaves 180 degrees for even baking and continue baking for another 10 to 20 minutes, or until the loaves are done. They should register 205 degrees in the center, be a rich golden brown all over, and sound hollow when thumped on the bottom.
14. Transfer the finished loaves to a rack and cool for at least 45 minutes before slicing or serving.

Notes: You can substitute other types of flour, including whole-wheat flour, for some or all of the high-gluten or bread flour. Use 1/2 cup whole-wheat flour, rye flour, or a combination of both flours for a classic French *pain au levain*.

Source: The Bread Baker's Apprentice