

BRYANNA'S CRUSTY HALF-WHOLE WHEAT NO-KNEAD SOURDOUGH BREAD

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Servings: 24

Yield: One 2-pound loaf, or two 1-pound loaves (weight of dough before baking)

First things first: If you don't already have a good sourdough starter, [here is the link to a printable copy of my instructions for making my vegan San Francisco-style sourdough starter](#), and how to care for it, replenish it, increase it and use it.

Before you start, read the information pans and baking vessels in "Tips" below, and about multiplying the recipe and bread pans size+, weights of dough per pan, in "Notes" at the very end of this document.

Ingredients:

Dry Ingredients:

2 cups whole-wheat flour

1 cup unbleached white flour

2 tsp salt

Wet Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups warmish water

3/4 cup active sourdough starter (*use your own, or my San Francisco-Style Vegan Sourdough Starter-- see link above*)

Instructions:

In a large bowl, mix together the Dry Ingredients.

In a smaller bowl or pitcher, whisk together the water and sourdough starter. Stir this into the Dry Ingredients just until all of the flour is absorbed into a "shaggy" dough. (*I like to use a [Danish dough whisk](#) for this.*)

Cover the bowl-- here are some options for that: 1.) cover with a fitted lid, if the bowl has one; 2.) cover with a damp towel and set a large board or pan lid over that; 3.) place the bowl inside of a large food-safe plastic bag and twist-tie it closed, leaving plenty of room for the dough to rise; 4.) scoop the dough into a covered proofing bucket, if you have one.

Let the dough rise at normal room temperature for about 12 hours (up to 18 hours). I start the dough in the evening and let it rise overnight, and plan to finish the bread in the morning. I mix the dough and set to rise about 9 pm, so that I can get it made into a loaf or loaves and rising again by 9:30 or 10 am the next morning.

After the first long rising, the dough should look softer and be doubled in size.

Don't stir the dough down. Cloak the dough with flour, and cover your work surface with a sheet of baking parchment or a silicone mat, flouring it well. *Note: The dough will be quite sticky-- keep your hands and the parchment floured and use a bench knife/dough scraper to handle the dough whenever possible.*

Using the dough scraper, scoop the dough onto the floured surface, sprinkle it with a little more flour and stretch the dough a little, folding it over on itself twice.

Cover the dough with a domed lid or pot, or a damp tea towel, and let rest for 15 minutes.

NOTE: If you don't plan to bake right away, you can refrigerate dough in a covered bowl or bucket, or even a zipper-lock bag, for up to 5 days. Then take the dough out and let rise for 8-12 hours or overnight.

While the dough is resting, get your pan(s), or whatever baking vessel(s) you are using, ready. Then choose the similar-sized and shaped vessel(s) in which you are going to rise the loaf or loaves. Cut a piece or pieces of baking parchment to fit into the rising vessel(s) with some overlap. Just lay it over the vessel and sprinkle the middle with flour. (NO OILING IS NECESSARY!)

After the 15 minutes are up, if you are making more than 1 loaf, cut the dough in half with the dough scraper. Using just enough flour to keep dough from sticking to your work surface, or to your fingers, quickly shape dough (or dough halves) into ball, oval or loaf shape(s), depending on the shape of the vessel(s) in which you are going to bake the bread. Do this by folding the dough under itself. If making more than one loaf, I advise weighing the dough (on floured parchment) so that you have even loaves, but you can "eyeball" it. *Note: The process will be a bit sticky and messy, but, with flour and a dough scraper, you'll get there!*

Place the shaped dough seam-side-down on the parchment-lined rising vessel(s) you have prepared earlier and dust the top of the dough lightly with more flour. With scissors, cut off the excess parchment just above the top of the rim of the vessel, leaving just enough to be able to grasp on each end in order to transfer to the hot baking vessel(s) when the time comes.

Place the rising vessel(s) inside of a food-safe plastic bag and twist-tie it closed, leaving plenty of room for the dough to rise; or cover with damp tea towels; or use a proofing box, if you have one. Let rise at a normal room temperature, setting your kitchen timer to 1 hour. When that hour is up, place your baking vessel(s) (see Tips) in the oven and turn the oven to 475°F. Now set the timer for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, ***IF the loaves have doubled in size (if not, let rise some more until they do)***, transfer the risen loaf or loaves to the (hot!) baking vessel(s), using the parchment under the dough as a "lifter", and set the dough (parchment and all) into or on your baking vessel(s). *(Don't worry-- it won't stick or burn!)* Cover with the lid(s) and bake for 30 minutes, then remove the lid(s), lower the heat to 350°F and bake another 15 minutes, or until the bread is a beautiful crusty golden-brown. With hands protected by heat-resistant oven mitts, remove the bread immediately, discarding the parchment, and cool on a rack.

If you can resist, it is best to wait until the bread is cooled (mostly, at least!) before tasting.

Nutrition Facts

Nutrition (per serving): 60 calories, 2 calories from fat, less than 1g total fat, 0mg cholesterol, 157.3mg sodium, 48.2mg potassium, 12.7g carbohydrates, 1.4g fiber, less than 1g sugar, 2.1g protein.

Tips

PANS FOR BAKING: (PS: This info is useful for baking all kinds of no-knead crusty breads.)

I have used all kinds of pans for baking this type of crusty bread, including an enamelled cast iron Dutch oven (8 1/2" across the bottom, 12" across the top, 5" deep), Granite Ware roasting pans of 3 sizes, and oval glazed ceramic

casseroles with lids (*I have one that is 9" x 6" x 3", and one that is 10" x 7 1/2" x 3". They can handle 2 to 2 1/2 lbs of dough respectively.*) You could also use a deep cast iron skillet with a raised lid, even a Pyrex lid, over the top.

If you have a bread cloche (*a stoneware or ceramic dish with a bell-shaped lid for baking round loaves*), of course you can use that. I have a Pampered Chef Round Lid/Bowl Baker Roaster and matching Sassafras SuperStone Deep Dish Pizza/Pie Baker (*I found them at a thrift store for a song!*) that I haven't tried yet, but I plan to soon. (*We are told not to preheat these before baking, but many bakers on Pampered Chef forums state that they do preheat them with no problem-- just don't spray them!*) You can also use a pizza stone with an overturned ceramic or cast iron or Granite Ware pot or roaster, or even the ceramic insert of your slow cooker, for the lid. If you Google "improvised bread bakers and cloches", you'll find lots of ideas, such as this from:

<http://www.thefreshloaf.com/node/22370/my-improvised-la-cloche-thai-style>

You can improvise a cloche for bread baking: a flower pot cloche. It's simply an inexpensive unglazed domed flower pot turned upside down on the matching rimmed dish that comes with it. The dish is 9 inches across the bottom, 11 inches across the top and 2 inches deep; the pot itself is 7 inches across the bottom, 10 inches across the top and 4 1/3 inches deep. Place the risen bread in the dish (*with the baking parchment it rose in*) and turn the flower pot upside down over it. You can plug the hole in the flower pot with a little wad of aluminium foil. (*The bread never actually touches the clay, by the way.*) This will set you back \$10; a La Cloche Baker costs upwards of \$50. (*Alternatively, place the risen dough on a heated pizza stone and place a large overturned dome-shaped clay flower pot over the dough.*)

What about unglazed "clay bakers" or terra cotta bakers (such as Romertopf)?

I didn't think these would work at first, but as long as you soak the pot (both bottom and top) in cold water for 15 minutes before placing it in a cold oven to preheat, it works just fine! I have a number of them, bought cheaply at thrift stores. I have one Romertopf-wanna-be that is very much like the Romertopf 109 or 110 (3 to 5-pound size that measures 12 x 8 1/4 x 6-inches. All of my clay bakers 2 or 2 1/2 quart size.

Here is some different advice from a forum at <http://www.thefreshloaf.com/node/15322/la-cloche-instructions>

"Romertopf is good for any small loaf that needs steam

I have an older unglazed Romertopf and I used to use it for bread all the time. I always pre-heated it while the oven was heating up; sometimes I pre-soaked it and sometimes I didn't, and that didn't seem to make much difference. I mostly used it for no-knead, but I'd say it's good for any bread that is baked with steam. The main reason I stopped using it is that the breads I'm making these days won't fit inside it, so for baguettes and miches I switched to a stone and steam pan arrangement, or in some cases a bigger cloche. I now prefer this because I find it easier to load loaves on a flat surface than in the deeper Romertopf. But there's no question that the results it produced were terrific."

(Note: there are large clay bakers, too.)

Lately, I have made conventional (but crusty) "sandwich loaves" by baking the dough in regular rectangular bread pans (metal or Pyrex) INSIDE of a large roaster.

Two 9 x 5" or 8 1/2 x 5" bread pans (with no handles), or two 7" round pans, or one 10" round pan will fit in a large oval roaster 15 1/2" long, 11" wide and 4" deep. (That's my largest oval roaster, but there are 18" and 19" ones, and even a rectangular one 21" x 15"!)

A medium oval roaster 12" long, 8" across and 3" deep will hold a 9 x 5 bread pan (with or without handles).

A small oval roaster 11" long, 7" across and 3" deep on it's own will hold a 2-3 lb. of dough, or it will hold a bread pan 8 1/2" x 4 1/4" x 2 1/2" OR 8" x 4" x 3".

Pre-heat the bread pans inside the roaster. Rise your bread in a pan or basket or anything else that will yield a loaf pretty much the size and shape to fit into the heated bread pan. When the oven comes up to temperature and the roasters and pans are hot, transfer the loaves (with the parchment) into the hot bread pans, cover the roaster and bake as directed.

Notes: (*The following information is also useful for making other kinds of bread.*)

1.) The following bread recipe can easily be doubled or tripled if you have extra sourdough starter on hand-- or you can increase your starter for making more loaves if you give yourself an extra day or two.

2.) 2 times the recipe will, of course, make two 2 lb. loaves, three 1-lb. 5 oz. loaves, or or four 1-lb. loaves (weights are approximate). *****THESE WEIGHTS ARE FOR THE DOUGH BEFORE BAKING***** I recommend purchasing an inexpensive kitchen scale, if you don't have one already.

3.) 3 times the recipe will make either three 2 lb. loaves, four 1 1/2 lb. loaves, six 1 lb. loaves, or (as I did) two (approximately) 1 3/4 lb. loaves + one 2 1/2 lb. loaf.

4.) 2 1/2 lbs. of dough (*weight before baking*) should be baked in a 10" round pan or 2 lbs. of dough should be baked in either 9 x 5 x 2 3/4" loaf pans or 9-10" round pans.
1 1/4 to 1 3/4 lbs. of dough should be baked in 8 x 4 x 2" loaf pans or 9" round pans
1 lb. of dough should be baked in either 7 x 3 x 2 1/2 loaf pans or 8-9" round pans.

You could also bake all 4 lbs of the doubled dough as "mega boule" or giant round loaf in an 11-12" round Dutch oven or similar pan, or a large stoneware baking cloche. (See Tips below for information about pans and other baking vessels.)