

Sourdough Instructions

Feeding the stater: Discard 80% of the stater, leaving 1-2 tablespoons. Place jar with remaining starter on the scale, press tare to zero it out. Add 50g of feeder flour mix (1/2 AP flour and 1/2 whole wheat flour) and 50g water - equal parts. Stir to incorporate. Leave on counter and feed every 1-2 days or keep in the fridge until you are ready to bake.

Starting your levain: Place jar on scale and press tare. Add 200g of the flour mix that you use to feed the starter and 200g water and 2 tablespoons of your starter. Stir to incorporate. Leave on counter for 4-6 hours or until it is almost doubled in size. Perform float test if you want to be sure it is ready to use.

Mixing your dough: Use a large bowl and place it on scale and press tare. Add 700g water and then 200g of levain. Your levain should float a bit in the water. Add 900g of bread flour and 100g whole wheat flour. Mix with your hands until all the flour is incorporated. It will be messy and look shaggy. Cover the bowl with a towel and leave on the counter for 30 min. Place bowl on scale and tare. Add 50g of water and 20g of salt. Mix it into the dough. The dough should look a little wetter/softer at this point. Leave it on the counter for 30 min, covered.

Folding the dough: After the salt has been in the dough for 30 min, wet your right hand and grab the dough at the 12 o'clock position and pull it towards the middle, repeat for the 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock positions. Cover bowl with towel and let sit for 30 min. This "folding" process should be done every 30 min, 3-4 times. So, if you start the first fold at 1pm, fold again at 1:30, 2, 2:30. After the last set of folds, cover with towel and let sit on the counter for 6-10 hours. It should rise substantially.

Shaping the dough: Using your rubber scraper, dump the dough onto the counter so that the dough that was at the top of the bowl is down on the counter. Sprinkle AP flour onto the top of the dough that is now face up - it will be sticky unless dusted with flour. Use your bench scraper to divide the dough in half. Grab the half-moon shaped dough ball and flip it over so that the floured side is now on the counter. Grab the edges of the dough and bring to the center, making it into a round shape. Flip the ball over again so that the seams you just created in the center are on the counter. You should have a smooth, round ball. Rotate the ball with both hands and slightly drag it towards you. This motion will create tension on the surface of the dough and gives the loaf a good crust.

Repeat this process for the other portion of dough. Let both balls sit on the counter for 30 min to rest, cover with a towel so they don't dry out.

Final shaping: Using a bench scraper, flip over the rested dough balls. Bring all the sides into the center in the same way you did before. Flip dough again so that the seams are down on the counter. You should have a smooth ball facing up. Rotate and drag towards you several times again to create more tension. Place the ball of dough with the smooth side down in the bowl. You should see the seams facing up in the banneton or bowl. Cover with plastic covering and place in the fridge overnight or for 8-12 hours.

Baking: Put both pieces of cast iron into the oven and preheat to 500F. The cast iron should be in the oven for at least 30-45 min preheating. Take the dough out of the fridge. Flip dough into the base of the cast iron so that the seam side is down. Make sure to use parchment or silpat in the bottom. Make a couple slits in the top of the dough with the bread lame. Put it in the oven and place lid on cast iron. Lower temp to 475F and bake for 25 min. Remove the lid and bake 15-20 min, depending on how brown you like it. Keep lid in the oven while baking the first loaf so it will stay hot for the second loaf. Remove loaf and let cool on cooling rack. (Adjust temperatures and bake times for your oven.)

Schedule 1: Start levain at 8am. Mix with flour at 12-1pm. Shape dough before bed. Bake the next morning.

Schedule 2: Start levain before bed. Keep bowl of levain in a cool spot (not the fridge). Mix with flour at 8am. Shape bread at 3-4pm. Bake around dinner time. If the dough does not sit in the fridge overnight, it will still bake beautifully but will be harder to transport into the cast iron and more difficult to score since it is not cold and firm. Sometimes I put it in the fridge for 20 min to firm it up a bit. I also use this schedule when making pizza for dinner.

*AP Flour = All Purpose Flour

**Beware of putting sourdough starter down the sink drain! It hardens...we're talking cement-like...and can damage the plumbing ;)

***Sourdough yeast can be used in any recipe, not just this artisan bread recipe ;)