

Basic Sourdough Bread

This is the recipe I use every time I make sourdough bread. It's a good simple base to start from and after some practice, it really takes me less than 20 minutes of hands-on time. Most bread recipes say they take hours and hours to make, but most of the time is just the yeast doing its thing while you go about your day. :)

The Night Before You Want to Make Bread

Before you go to bed, add equal parts warm (not hot) water and flour to your start (I usually do about ½ cup of each, but you can do more if you are making more than one loaf of bread). Stir the start to mix in the flour and water then leave on the counter with lid loosely on.

The Next Day- Bread Day!

Your starter should be bubbly and have poofed up in the bowl. It's ready to make bread!

Make Dough: In a large bowl, add:

- 3 Cups flour (any kind of flour- white, wheat, or a combination)
- 1¼ Cups warm (not hot) water
- ¾ Cup happy, bubbly starter
- 1 Tablespoon honey or sugar (the yeast eats it- helps get a better rise)
- 1½ teaspoons salt

Mix the ingredients with a spoon until it starts to come together, then knead for a few minutes until you have a smooth dough ball. I knead by folding the dough in half, then pushing it down, then folding it in half, then pushing down... repeat. If the dough is too sticky, put flour on your hands or even add some flour to the dough, a little at a time. Kneading is one of those things that you get a feel for with practice.

Proof: Grease a medium-sized bowl with cooking spray or oil, put your dough ball in, and cover with plastic (plastic wrap works, I use a shower cap). Let the dough sit for about 3 hours, or until it poofs up to about double in size.

There is some flexibility here depending what else you have going on that day. I find 3 hours is about right, but I have rushed it and done a quick rise in 2 hours, and I have totally forgotten I was making bread and left it for 10 hours. The dough will rise faster in a warmer place. The bread will taste more sour if you let it rise longer.

Second Rise: After the dough has risen, take off the plastic, fold and push down the dough a few times (around 10) until it's down to a smaller ball again. Then put the plastic back on and let it sit for 2 more hours, or until it's poofed back up.

Bake: Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Tip the bowl over and dump the risen dough onto a baking sheet. Slash the top of the loaf with a sharp knife (optional, but makes it pretty). Humidity helps you get a nice chewy crust, so I put another pan with about 8 ice cubes (or some water) in the oven with the bread. Bake for about 22 minutes or until golden brown.

Eat that yummy bread! :)