

## TEST KITCHEN'S SOURDOUGH BREAD

makes 2 loaves

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup sourdough starter  
2 cups whole wheat flour  
4 ½ cups unbleached bread flour  
1 tbsp salt  
3 cups warm filtered water  
2 tbsp flax seeds (optional)

1. Measure 1 cup of starter and activate it by letting it warm up on the counter for an hour or so.
2. Feed the rest of the starter with a half cup of flour and a half cup of water and place it back in the fridge until your next bake.  
*These ingredients are in addition to the recipe; this keeps starter full.*
3. In a separate bowl, mix the remaining flour and warm water. Mix ingredients for 1 minute and let rest for 30 minutes.
4. Add 1 cup of the activated starter and salt to the flour mixture. Mix and knead the dough by folding and pinching it in the bowl or on the counter. When it becomes a uniform mass, stretch the dough few times with wet hands. If kneading on the counter, use a scraper because the dough will be very sticky at this point. Keep folding and stretching for 4 minutes total.
5. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and leave on the counter to rise for 4–6 hours or place it in the refrigerator for 8–12 hours. This stage is called bulk fermentation. Some people stretch and fold the dough a couple of times during the first hour of this stage.

### "YEAST PUTS RABBITS TO SHAME"

Ken Forkish, *Flour Water Salt Yeast*

6. When dough doubles in size, divide it into two parts. To shape loaves, stretch the dough, fold it and roll into round shapes. Place them seam-up on the floured kitchen towel. Space them a few inches apart to leave space to rise. They will rise more slowly or quickly depending on the temperature. An optimum temperature is 74°F. This step may take about an hour.
7. When ready, remove them from the wrapped towel and place on the floured surface. Shape them once more by tucking the surface under the shape. Place on the baking tray. This stage is called proofing.
8. When loaves double in size again, preheat oven to 500°F. Make some steam by splashing water just before placing loaves in the oven. Ideally, you would want to use a bread stone or a Dutch oven to prevent burning, but it is optional.
9. Use a utility knife or scissors to slash loaves about a half inch deep. Slashed loaves will come out nicely rounded. After placing loaves into the oven, turn temperature down to 475°F and bake them for 30 minutes.
10. Turn loaves to make sure they get even heat. Set temperature to 425°F. Bake 15 minutes more.
11. When loaves turn dark brown, take them from the oven to cool. If you don't have cooling racks, prop them on the side of the baking tray with one side sticking out. The gap between the tray and the bottom of the loaf helps them cool better.
12. Give the loaves at least an hour to cool before slicing. You can freeze them for later and they will taste like fresh. Enjoy!

## MAKE YOUR OWN SOURDOUGH STARTER

*Making your own starter is a very rewarding experience. It is a slow process, but the actual labor is minimal. Let nature do most of the work.*

1. Mix 1 tbsp of whole wheat flour with 1 tbsp of water and leave it in an open jar at room temperature.
2. The next day, add 2 tbsp of whole wheat flour and 2 tbsp of water. Mix.
3. Each day, add another 2 tbsp of flour and 2 tbsp of water until your mixture bubbles (about 3 days).
4. Once it bubbles, store it in the fridge in a jar with a non-airtight lid and feed once a week with 3 tbsp of flour and 3 tbsp of water. The mixture should be the consistency of cream.



Starter is a living organism. Consider it your new pet.