



Whole Grain Sourdough Loaf

A step-by-step companion guide to the video course at <http://breadlessons.com>

Time Note: The times indicated here are estimates, and are based on an 8-hour sourdough culture fermentation. The more you practice baking, the better you'll get a feel for how to adjust times and ingredient ratios depending on your particular situation – ambient temperature, humidity, altitude, etc. – and the logistics of when you want to actually bake the bread.

Prepare the Sourdough Starter

00:00 8-10 hours before you plan to mix the dough, combine 100g sourdough culture (“seed culture”) with 200g grams of 75-degree water and mix with your hand until the seed culture is mostly incorporated into the water. Add 200g of flour and mix until thoroughly combined.

Cover the starter with a towel or piece of plastic and let it sit out on your counter for 8-10 hours until it has doubled in size, has bubbles, and is the consistency of thick pancake batter.

Note: The above ratios will yield a ripe sourdough culture in about 8-10 hours. If you want to slow down the fermentation process, reduce the amount of seed culture. For example, a mixture of 50g seed culture plus 200g each of flour and water will be ready in about 12 hours.

I. Mix the Ingredients

08:00 Once the sourdough starter is ripe (and before it starts to deflate), combine the ingredients in a large bowl:

2-3 loaf recipe (1,000g of flour):

1. 700-850g water (see note below)
2. 250g sourdough starter
3. 1,000g flour
4. 24g salt

1 loaf recipe (500g of :

1. 375g-425g water (see note below)
2. 125g sourdough starter
3. 500g flour
4. 12g salt

Mix until ingredients are completely incorporated and then allow dough to rest for 20-40 minutes. After the resting period, the dough should begin to show signs of becoming a cohesive mass. **Note about hydration:** The more whole wheat, the more water you'll need: use 85% hydration for 100% whole grain flour; 75% hydration for a 50/50 blend of bread flour and whole wheat; and 70% hydration for 100% bread flour.

08:30 Knead dough by hand until the dough is smooth on the outside, for about 5 minutes. Periodically use bench knife to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Once the dough is smooth, cover bowl with a towel or piece of plastic and leave for one hour for Rest #1.

II. Stretch and Fold

- 09:30** Stretch and fold #1
Rest
- 10:30** Stretch and fold #2
Rest
- 11:30** Stretch and fold #3
Rest

Take care not to overmix the dough during the stretch and folds!

If the dough becomes too dry, wet your hands while working to add some moisture.

If dough is too wet, you can add a little more flour, but try to avoid doing this, as it will throw off the ratios of flour to starter and salt!

III. Scale the Dough

- 12:30** Once dough has rested for 4 hours and doubled or tripled in size, turn it out onto a floured work surface. Handle dough carefully to avoid de-gassing it. Depending on how many loaves you are making, use a bench knife to cut the dough into equal portions.

IV. Bench Rest

- 12:35** Handling the dough lightly, shape the portions into an approximation of whatever form you plan on baking. Place the dough portions on a floured work surface, cover with a piece of plastic, and let them sit in the bench rest state for about 30 minutes.

13:00 V. Shape and Proof the Loaves

Following the instructions in the video for Step 5, shape the loaves and place them seam-side up in the proofing baskets. Cover the baskets with linen cloth or plastic. For a cold proof, put the baskets in the refrigerator and leave them to proof for at least 12 hours. (If you want to bake the loaves sooner, you can do a room temperature proof. In that case, leave the proofing baskets out on the counter for ~1 hour.)

25:00 VI. Bake the Loaves

1. Place your Dutch oven in a cold oven and preheat to 500 degrees for at least 10 minutes.
2. Remove the hot Dutch Oven from the oven and place on a heat proof surface.
3. If you're having trouble with the dough sticking to the Dutch Oven, you can sprinkle a little bit of cornmeal in the bottom of the Dutch oven at this point.
4. Take the cold proofed dough from the fridge. Using both hands, flip the proofing basket over and carefully transfer the dough to the hot Dutch Oven so it is right side up.
5. Score the dough (make a few slits in the top of the dough) using a razor blade.
6. Place lid on the Dutch Oven and put in the oven. Depending on your oven, you might want to experiment with lowering the temperature to ~450 degrees at some point during the first 20 minutes and leaving it there for the remainder of the bake.
7. Bake for about 20 minutes with the lid on.
8. Remove lid and continue to bake for another 15-25 minutes until the crust is golden brown.
9. Remove from oven and flip loaf onto a cooling rack. Thump the bottom of the loaf. If you hear a resonant hollow sound, the loaf is done.

26:00 VII. Eat, Share, and Enjoy! ☺

