



Matthew James Duffy

Introduction: My Journey

Welcome to Simplifying Sourdough. My name is Matthew James Duffy and I want to congratulate you on taking the first step towards making great sourdough bread at home. I'd like to introduce myself and tell you a little bit about my background.

2008 ○ →



After graduating from University with a degree in Hotel and Food Administration, I went to The Stratford Chef School. What followed was over a decade and a half of travel, eating, working, and experiencing all of the amazing things the food world has to offer.

My love of bread really started when I was an apprentice cook. While I had no intentions of learning to bake (in fact quite the opposite), I slowly became obsessed with the sourdough process.

2007-2009 ○ →



My first real exposure to good bread was while working at Rundles, one of my culinary school placements. While at Rundles I was nominated to represent Canada at the world Slow Food conference in Turin, Italy. Being in Italy around so many unique food artisans from around the world is one of the most inspiring moments any cook could have. In my summers off from Rundles, I worked at restaurants that were focused on a slow food mentality and I got to further my understanding of breads.

2009-2011 ○ →



After a brief cooking stint in Japan, I found myself working at Langdon Hall. I was able to take my training and start making breads in a hotel that was one of the top 3 in the country and a restaurant in the world's top 100.



2010 ○ →



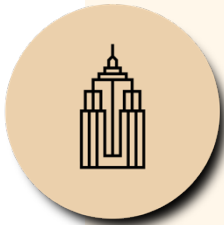
I travelled to Denmark to intern at a small restaurant in Copenhagen named Noma. I was served the most amazing rye bread I had ever tasted. It was earthy, sweet and robust all at the same time. When I asked what made the bread so amazing, Katrine showed me a tabletop mill. Her family milled their own rye and baked rye bread almost daily and had been doing so in the family for generations. This was a pivotal point in my baking where I finally came to understand that flour was an ingredient. Flour was something important and not just a commodity to be used for bread baking. Fresh, local, and organic were three things I sought out in restaurants and my own food but never had I applied the same mentality to flour.

2011 ○ →



I won a scholarship to travel to Spain and study gastronomy across the country. I visited and toured 3-star restaurants, bakeries, wineries and cheese makers. I spent one year studying all things Spanish cuisine while working in both Madrid and Barcelona.

2012 ○ →



I moved to New York City to work with Daniel Boulud at Café Boulud. Cooking at this level is not for everyone and Daniel's kitchens are some of the finest in the world. While my time with Daniel did not include much professional baking, it was the equivalent to getting a master's degree in food. Everything is done in house and at the highest level.

2012-2016 | After a year in New York City, I relocated to Toronto to help open Daniel's restaurant at the Four Seasons Flagship hotel in Toronto.

2016 ○ →



Visited Elmore Mountain Bread in Vermont. Owners Blair and Andrew mill their own grains and only use wheat grown in Vermont. This sustainable model and ability to control the flour was truly something special. This was the best bread I had ever tasted. I spent a few weeks talking about natural fermentation and milling flour. These deep talks would again change the course of my career.

I became a private chef for an extremely high-profile gentleman. I was responsible for all aspects of the kitchen and started working on perfecting bread baking in home kitchen. Pastries, challahs, sourdough breads, wood fired pizzas and anything I wanted my boss to try. I had a free run to make what I wanted. During this time, I developed a deeper understanding of making bread in different home settings as I often travelled and cooked in multiple properties.

2018-Present



I had never considered teaching as a career. When a fulltime opportunity came up at Centennial College, I offered a new vision as to what we could create with our bread program and how we could change the way we teach bread baking to our students. I have spent the past three years developing what I hope will become the best artisan bread program in Canada.

Baking sourdough bread started as just a job then quickly graduated to a hobby, passion a career and a way of life. All of the years I had been baking, I was pursuing perfection in bread. The reality is, it's a never-ending journey and you have to enjoy the journey as much as the destination.

I want to share what I have learned with people of all ages that are discovering the same passion I have been following all these years. Sourdough bread has impacted me so much that it changed the course of my career and my life many times over. I always have a dough rising in the fridge or a starter on the counter.