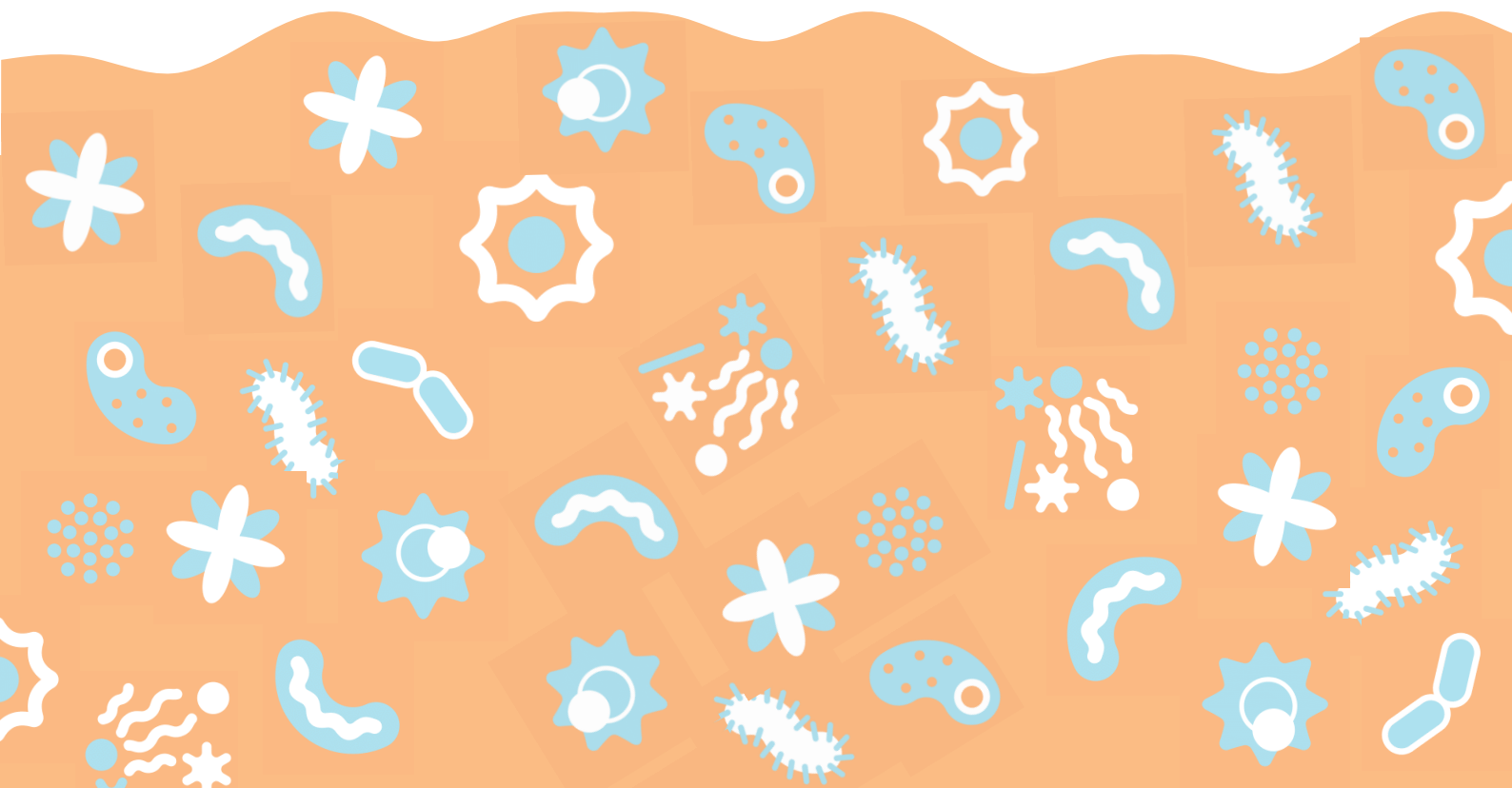
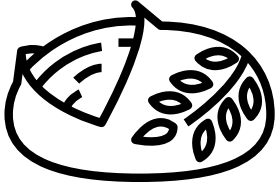


Sourdough Bread Baking Guide

Stress-baking should not be stressful.



Before You Begin

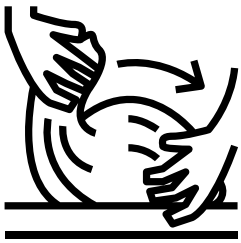


What is the goal?

You will produce a deep-coloured, crisp-crusted, airy yet chewy loaf of bread using this recipe - truly, nothing short of a miracle! You will transform simple flour, water, and salt into beautiful bread with the help of a sourdough starter.

How hard is it?

It's easy! The recipe makes use of time and the power of sourdough microbes to produce an excellent loaf of bread with minimal work.

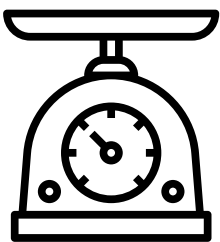


How far ahead do I have to plan?

You can start the dough anywhere from 12-24 hours before you are planning on baking it. To extend the timeline to accommodate things like sleep and busy schedules, we recommend cold proofing. This means letting the final rise of the dough happen in the fridge.

Ensure you use sourdough which has been fed in the last 24 hours for best results.

Why do I need a scale?



Our recipe is expressed in weight and baker's percentage. We strongly encourage making all baking measurements using a scale. The baker's percentage is the amount of an ingredient in terms of the weight of the flour - so for example, the 350g of water in the recipe is 70% of the flour. This makes it easy to scale the recipe up or down: simply multiply the percentage of each ingredient by the amount of flour you're using.

Caring for your sourdough starter

What is sourdough?

Your sourdough starter is a community of microbes, mostly yeast and lactic acid bacteria. The sourdough needs to be cared for regularly in order to produce consistent results. The sourdough starter you have been provided should be fed within 24 hours of taking it home.

How do I feed it?

To grow enough sourdough to make a batch of bread, simply discard all but a quarter cup of sourdough (about 25g) and then feed with equal proportions of flour and water: 50g flour and 50g water.

You can scale this up or down as you please, maintaining a 1:2:2 ratio of sourdough starter, water, and flour. The starter should rise to double or triple in size within 8 hours if it is healthy – and often quicker, especially in the summer months!

After it rises fully, it may drop or become more fluid – this is okay, but refrigerate if you're not going to use it immediately. To test if it's ready, take a small spoonful of sourdough starter and drop it in a cup of water – it should float.



Your starter will usually float when its ready to use.

Sourdough feeding table

Amount of sourdough	Amount of flour and water	Makes enough starter for this many loaves, plus a little extra
25g	50g	1
50g	100g	3
100g	200g	6
200g	400g	13

Caring for your sourdough starter



A freshly risen sourdough starter - note the bubbles!

Which flour do I use?

In terms of which flour to use, we recommend using whole grain flour every third feeding, or as 1/3 of the feeding mixture. Note that whole grain feedings might not hold as much gas and so might be very active but may not pass the float test.

How do I store my sourdough starter?

If you do not plan on making bread for a few days, you can reliably store a fed starter in the fridge for up to a month without feeding. When you need it again, make sure you feed it until it reliably rises again – sometimes the sourdough organisms need a couple feedings to come back to full strength!

Can I make my starter Gluten-Free?

Our start is made with malt, so while it isn't ideal for those with Celiac disease, it does work well for those who are looking to reduce their gluten in-take. Success has been found using a combination of Quinoa & Buckwheat flour. You can check out a guest blog post by Rani Cruz discussing her experience with making our starter Gluten-Free, here:

escarpmentlabs.com/blogs/resources/baking-gluten-free-sourdough-with-rani-cruz

Sourdough Bread Recipe

Ingredients

500g / 100%	Unbleached bread flour (substitute up to 50% whole grain flour)
11g / 2.2%	Salt
350mL / 70%	Water (room temperature)
75g / 15%	Sourdough starter

Equipment Required

Large mixing bowl
Digital kitchen scale
Heavy cast iron pot (Dutch Oven)

Instructions



Mix

1. In a large bowl, measure out the flour. Stir the sourdough into the water until it is evenly mixed (top images). Add the water and sourdough mixture slowly and evenly, then stir until the dough is wet and sticky and most of the flour is incorporated (bottom images). This will take about 30 seconds. After that, wet the spoon or use wet hands to continue mixing for another 30 seconds. The flour should be completely incorporated - if it is not, wet your hands or spoon and stir until you have a wet, sticky dough. If it is too wet or too dry, adjust with a little bit of flour or water.



Sourdough Bread Recipe

2. Cover the dough and let sit for one hour. After one hour, mix in the salt using wet hands. Mixing in the salt after the dough rests is called the “autolyse” step. This step improves the texture of the bread and helps kickstart fermentation.

3. Cover the dough, then let it sit at room temperature for 8-12 hours. Timing will depend on your kitchen temperature. If you find that the dough rises to the top of the bowl faster than 8 hours, don't worry – just put it in the fridge until you're ready.



Ferment

4. The dough should rise significantly (left), and appear full of bubbles (right). Dust a work surface (countertop, large cutting board, etc) with flour, then remove the dough from the bowl using a wet bowl scraper or wet hands - you should be able to get most of it out in one piece.



Shape

5. With the dough now on the surface, ensure that the bottom is not sticking - if it is, lift it up and add some more flour to the surface. Flour your hands, then take one edge of the dough, and gently stretch the dough up and outward, then fold into the centre (left and middle). Repeat this for three more edges to make a square-ish piece of dough. Let the

Sourdough Bread Recipe

dough rest, covered (5-10 minutes), then gently repeat the ‘stretch and fold’ procedure. If the stretched pieces are not sticking, wet the top of the dough a little bit. You will now have a ball of shaped dough (right).



Proof

6. Generously dust a cotton or linen tea towel with flour, corn meal, wheat bran, semolina or rice flour. Gently lift the dough onto the towel, seam-side down (left). Dust the top of the dough with any of the above so it doesn't stick, then place the dough onto the towel, and place the covered dough into a large bowl to rise for 1-2 hours. A properly proofed dough will spring back half way after a light poke (right). A half-hour before the proof is done, preheat your oven to 450°F with a rack in the lower third of the oven. Place a large, heavy, oven proof pot into the oven while it preheats.



Bake

7. With the dough ready and the pot preheated, flour the dough if it's sticky, then invert the dough onto a piece of parchment paper that is larger than the dough (left). You can slash the dough with a sharp knife if you want - it's up to you. Remove the pot from the oven, and remove the lid - be careful, it will be very hot! Take the parchment paper by the

Sourdough Bread Recipe

corners, and carefully lift the dough into the pot (middle). Cover with the lid, then bake for 30 minutes. After this time, take the lid off the pot (the big reveal – right). Bake for another 15-25 minutes, depending on how dark you want the crust to be.



Cool

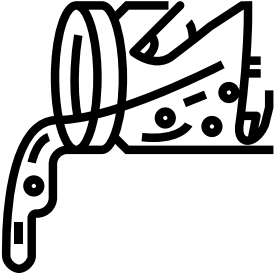
8. Remove the pot from the oven, then take the bread out (using oven mitts!) and let the bread cool for at least one hour before slicing. The loaf will usually crackle as it cools. Cooling is the last critical step!

Slice and enjoy!



Frequently Asked Questions

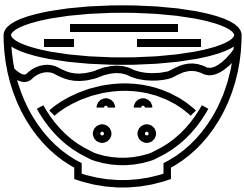
Troubleshooting starter



If starter does not pass the float test, or produces loaves that are too flat and/or acidic: the yeast in the starter may have died. It's not ultra-traditional, but the easy fix to this is to add a pinch of instant yeast to your starter to bring the yeast population back into balance with the acidifying bacteria. If this doesn't work, it may be time to purchase another starter.

My loaves are too sour or too flat.

If your breads are turning out too acidic or too difficult to handle (falling apart), try fermenting for a shorter period of time (end of step 1) or refrigerating the dough until ready to shape/proof. This will help slow down acid production by the bacteria in the sourdough culture.



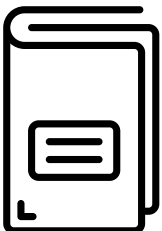
How do I make my very own sourdough starter?

There's some great instructional material out there. This is the method we've used successfully: <https://breadtopia.com/make-your-own-sourdough-starter/>

Further questions: feel free to email us at ferment@escarpmentlabs.com

Additional References:

These are our favourite bread books:



Peter Reinhart – The Bread Baker's Apprentice, Whole Grain Breads

Jim Lahey – My Bread

Chad Robertson – Tartine Bread No. 1, No. 3

Reinhart encourages exploration of many different methods. Our recipe is a combination of Lahey and Robertson's. Tartine Bread No. 3 has many amazing recipes incorporating whole grains, porridges, and sprouted grains and is worth checking out!.