



Sour Dough Bread

Sour dough bread uses the natural yeasts in the air to create a batter (mother) that is continually fermenting. So there is no need to add dried or fresh yeast, just use the mother instead.

The mother is continually fermenting; converting the starch in the flour to sugar then using the sugar to feed the yeast. So the mother needs regular feeding with flour to keep it going. If it runs out of starch it turns very acidic and dies.

How to Make Sourdough Starter

1 Begin with a clean jar or container. Blend one cup of warm water and a cup of flour to stir. Place in jar or container and cover with lid.

2 Store at room temperature, about 70-75 degrees. On top of the fridge works for me.

3 Every 24 hours, feed the starter. Do that by discarding half the mixture and adding 1/2 cup warm water and 1/2 cup flour. Re-cover the starter after each feeding and put back into its warm place.

4 Within 3-4 days, the starter will begin to bubble and ferment. There will be a distinctive (but not unpleasant) sour smell, sort of like a brewery. That means the yeast is working. This process may happen a little sooner, or it may take up to a week. In any case, when it bubbles and smells like this, the starter is ready to use.



*A bowl of rye mother
and one white flour
mother*

Feeding the mother

If using from frozen allow to defrost and then feed.

Start by weighing the container so that you know how much mother is in the container. Weigh the mother and container, take away the weight of the container and then add flour to the container (the same weight of mother) and enough hand hot water (usually about the same weight of the mother) to make a stiff batter. As you are always adding the same amount of flour you can end up with vats of 'mother' so be prepared to throw some away before you feed it rather than increasing it too much.

Feed the mother after use and at least 12 hours before you need to use it again. If you do not feed the mother regularly it will die! It needs to be fed regularly every day to remain active. Store at room temperature.

If you do not want to use it every day you can feed it and then put it into the fridge with a lid on for about 3 weeks without feeding. When you want to use it again take it out of the fridge about 12 hours beforehand and feed. The mother needs to look active with lots of bubbles and a good batter like consistency.

The mother freezes well and it is worth freezing some in case you kill it. When you want to use the frozen mother, take it out of the freezer and stand it at room temperature until thawed. Feed it and then use it after 12 hours.

To make the bread

(If you wish to produce overnight sour dough then just reduce the mother to 100 grams and allow it to stand at room temperature for at least 14 hours then process.)

Ingredients

	Grams	%
White Flour	500	100
Salt	10	2
Mother	250	50
Water	300	60

Adjust the amount of water to produce slack dough. It depends on how runny your batter is. You might try 200 g to start.

Finished dough temperature: - 25 to 30°C if possible

Method

Scale off all the ingredients into the mixing bowl and bring together. When it has started to form dough, turn out onto your work surface. It will be very sticky and your fingers will get glued together.

Then tear down (literally tearing and moulding) to form a soft silky dough.

Dust up and place in a bowl covered with plastic to avoid skinning, and then allow to stand in bulk for 5 hours. After this time, knock back by gently folding and moulding the dough taking care not to rip the dough.

Place back into the bowl and cover. Stand for 2 hours.

Take out of the bowl and give it the final mould.

Place onto a well floured baking tray. The final prove will be about one and a half hours.

Bake at about 220°C for 30 to 35 mins.

If you want a nice crispy crust, put a cast iron pan in the bottom of the oven. Allow to heat up and then put 2 ice cubes in after putting the bread in the oven. The steam gelatinises on the crust to make it crispy.