

recipe:

Berkeley Sourdough Bread



Sourdough breads take advantage of the flavors produced by “wild” yeast and bacteria. Once you’ve made a [sourdough starter](#), you can put it into action with the following bread recipe.

[Recipe Conversions](#)

Fernando Padilla, Plant Manager of Boudin Bakery in San Francisco, CA.

What Do I Need?

For the starter:

- 1 piece of [starter](#) the size of a tangerine (kept out at room temperature for 6 to 8 hours or in the refrigerator for a few days)
- 2 cups warm water
- 2 cups organic, unbleached white or all-purpose flour

For the dough:

- 2 1/2 cups organic, unbleached white or all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 3/4 cup starter from the previous step
- 3/4 cup cool water
- Cooking oil (to grease the bowl)



The same “Mother Dough” (sourdough starter) has been used at Boudin Bakery in San Francisco, CA since 1849.

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- a mixing bowl
 - a food processor (optional)
 - a large spoon
 - a baguette tray or parchment-lined baking tray
 - a razor blade
 - a spray bottle

What Do I Do?

1. Break up the starter, dilute it in the water, and mix in the flour. Cover this mixture loosely and set it aside in a warm spot for 18–24 hours or until it is quite bubbly.

* Tip

Covering the dough as it rises helps to avoid moisture loss and contamination.

2. Mix the flour and salt together in a food processor fitted with the plastic dough blade. Pour the starter in and pulse the machine several times to mix the ingredients. Then, with the machine running, slowly add the water and continue mixing for a few minutes (If you don’t have a food processor, simply mix the dough in a bowl for about 5 minutes, until it forms a ball.)

3. Remove the mixture from the bowl and place it on a well-floured work table and round it into a ball.

4. Let the dough rise in a well-oiled bowl, covered, in the refrigerator for 12–15 hours. Remove from the refrigerator and allow it to warm up at room temperature for 2 hours.

5. Divide the dough into 2 pieces, and stretch them into tight baguette shapes. Place each one on a baguette tray or a parchment-lined baking tray.

6. Cover the baguettes and let them rise for 6–7 hours, until they have doubled in size.

7. Preheat the oven to 450° F.

8. Using a sharp razor blade, slash the tops of the loaves diagonally 3 or 4 times (this will allow them to expand more easily while baking) and spray them with a fine mist of water from a spray bottle. **9.** Place the loaves in the oven and immediately spray them, along with the walls and floor of the oven, with water. Repeat this step after about 5 minutes of baking. **10.** Bake the loaves 25–30 minutes, until they are entirely golden and the crust is crisp and blistered.

What's Going On?

What's the purpose of spraying the dough and oven with water just before and 5 minutes into baking? The crust that begins to form on dough as it bakes can make it harder for the loaf to rise. Spraying the oven with water creates steam. This keeps the outer skin of the loaf moist and flexible, and helps it rise to its maximum volume with a good shape. Steam also encourages starch granules on the surface of the loaf to fully gelatinize, which gives the crust its crispy texture.

What Else Can I Try?



Sourdough comes in a variety of flavors, depending on what species of yeast and bacteria are present in the starter. You can also adjust the taste by letting the starter ferment for a longer or shorter period of time, which allows yeast and bacteria to add more or less of their flavors to the dough. After you've made one loaf, experiment by letting your starter ferment for a few days longer before mixing your dough.