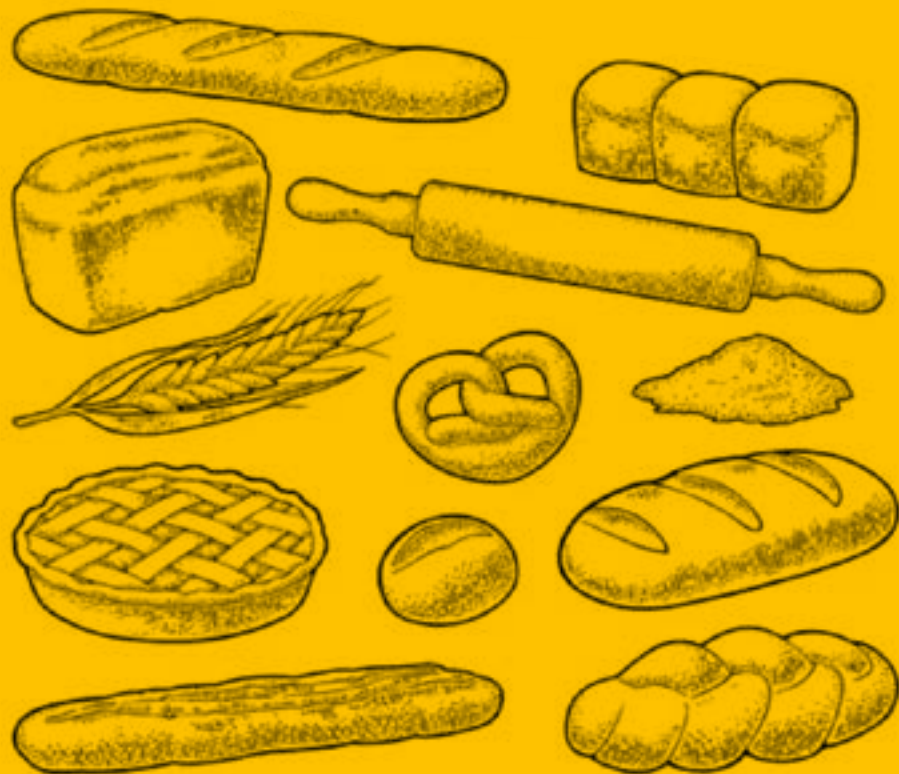


# SOURHOUSE COMMUNITY COOKBOOK



Ver. 3.1

2023

This cookbook is dedicated  
to the 1200+ baker-backers and dozens of our baker friends  
that helped bring Goldie to the world in 2022.



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LIKE THOSE LITTLE COMMUNITY COOKBOOKS  
YOUR GRANDMOTHER COLLECTED...

Once upon a time, local communities (schools, churches, community centers and the like) would put together small cookbooks to share and preserve local knowledge.

We offer this collection of recipes, links and sourdough baking tips in the spirit of those community cookbooks our grandmothers collected.

You have the new and expanded copy of the Sourhouse Community Cookbook. It feels like a starting point more than a destination. It seems like something we should update regularly and share widely.

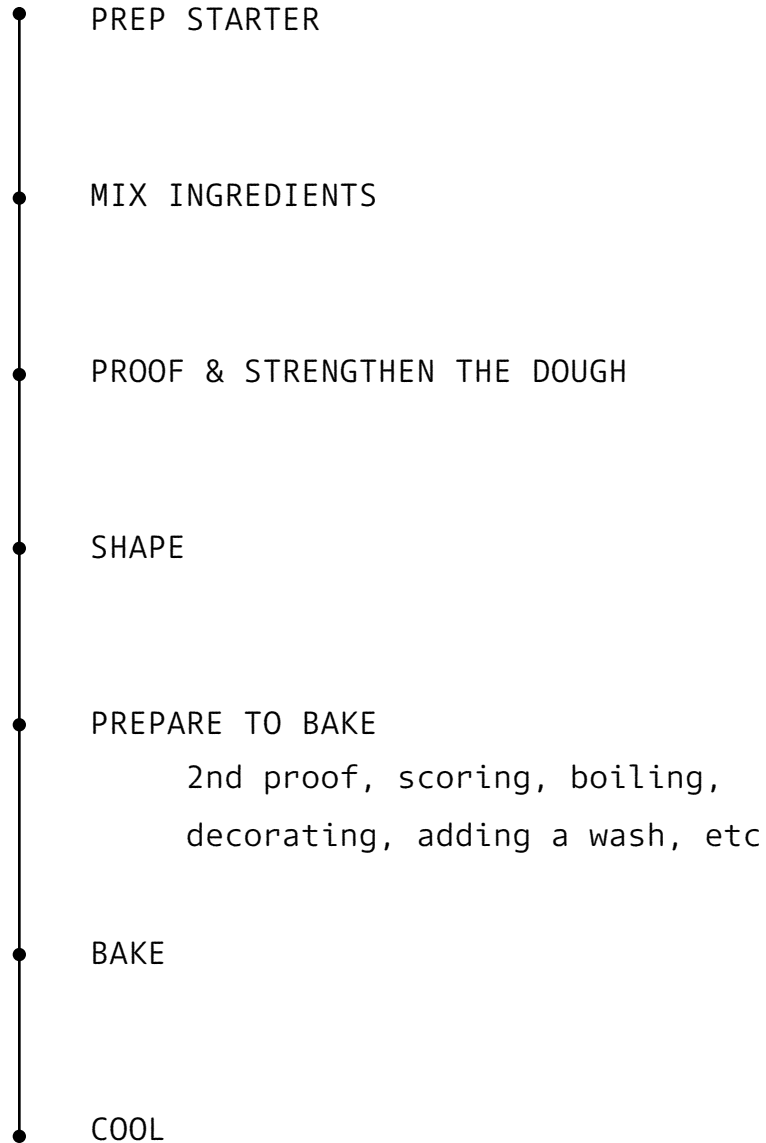
So feel free to share copies with bakers you love.

If you have recipes or tips to contribute to future versions of this collection we would love to see them. Email your contributions to us at [cookbook@sourhouse.co](mailto:cookbook@sourhouse.co)

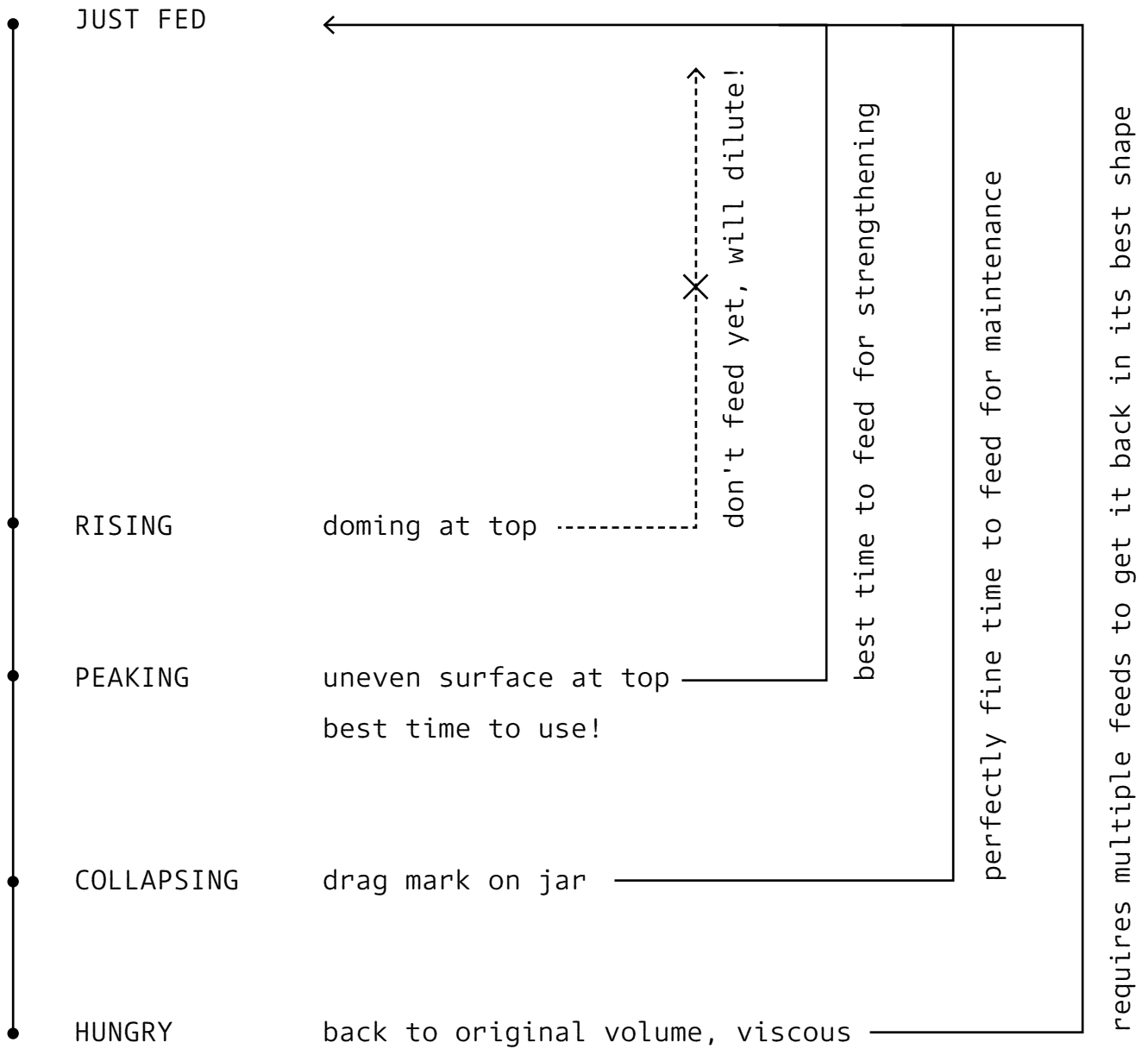
Warmly,

*Erik & Jenny*

## THE 7 STAGES OF SOURDOUGH BAKING



THE 5 STAGES OF SOURDOUGH STARTER

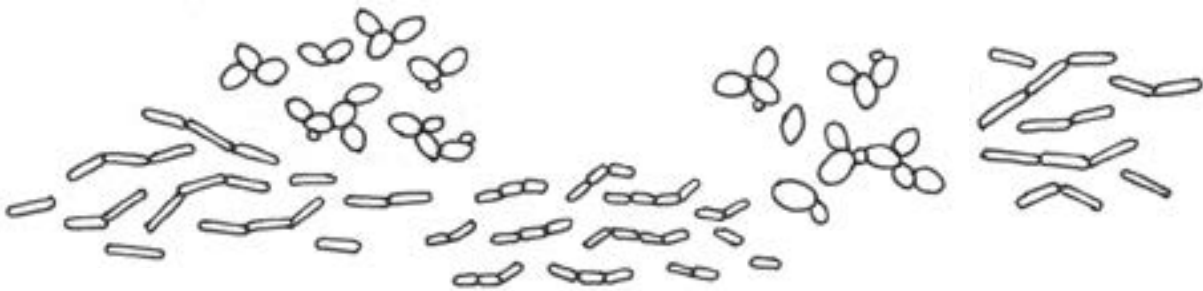


## HOW TO START A SOURDOUGH STARTER

Day 1 - Invite the pioneer microbes. Mix equal parts (20g each is enough) flour and water into a straight sided transparent container. We recommend using whole wheat or rye flour. Stir well. Cover loosely. An extra stir later in the day will give it a boost.

Day 2 - Feed the competitors. If you see bubbles, discard half and stir in equal amounts flour and water. If not, give it a stir and wait another day. Cover loosely.

Days 3-7 - The great battle. Repeat the discard and feed cycle for at least a week until your starter doubles within 24hrs. The sourdough yeasts will eventually win the battle, bring peace to your starter and focus on the work of raising your bread. If your starter can double in volume within 6 hours from 1:1:1 feeding, you have a starter ready for a bake.



*continued >*



HOW TO START A SOURDOUGH STARTER  
(continued)

Tips

- Keep your starter warm. Ideally in the [Goldilocks Zone](#) (75-82°F/ 24-28°C).
- Sterile jars and utensils are not necessary but everything that touches your starter in its jar should be clean.
- Use warm, filtered water.
- You can use unbleached white flour, it just might take a bit longer without the boost of rye or wheat flour. You can transition to feeding with white flour after your starter is established.
- If it is very bubbly in the first few days and smells strongly, it isn't ready to bake. These are pioneer bacteria and yeasts that are not good to eat. Give the sourdough bacteria time to make a home in your starter before baking.
- If you see a pause in activity around day 3-4, that is ok. Just keep going.
- After you've been feeding your starter for about a month, [create a backup](#) by dehydrating a small amount. Twice-a-day feeds will make your starter even more active. Try it after day 4.
- Still having problems? Request some free [sourdough starter](#) and some guides on how to use it.

## HOW TO FEED & CARE FOR A SOURDOUGH STARTER

With proper care your sourdough starter will be very active and help you make your best bread. Don't worry! Sourdough starter is robust stuff and you will get to know your starter by experimenting and making mistakes.

We are going to show you a way to back it up [later in this book](#) in case you have a catastrophic accident.

### Initial instructions for feeding a starter:

1. Discard all but a small amount of your starter. 20g is a good place to start until you figure out your needs.
2. Combine equal parts flour, water and starter. E.g. 20g Flour, 20g Water, 20g Starter
3. Stir until no dry flour remains in your jar. You will have a thick paste.
4. Observe how long your starter takes to double in volume at different temperatures. You will need to know this to plan your bake schedule. Read more about tracking your starter's Rise Time [here](#).

If a starter is kept on the counter, it should be fed at least once a day. If kept in the fridge, feed once a week or so.

*continued >*

## HOW TO FEED & CARE FOR A SOURDOUGH STARTER (continued)

### To prepare starter for a bake:

1. Look at the recipe you are using to find the amount of starter you need.
2. Increase the amount of starter, flour, and water in your next feeding to ensure that you will have enough starter for your recipe, plus ~20g left over for future use.
3. Feed your starter several hours in advance (according to your starter's Rise Time) of when you want to bake.
4. A starter is ready to use for baking when it has at least doubled in volume. For best performance, you want your starter to be "peaked". Peak height differs from one starter to another. For some, it is double, for others, it is more than triple.

### Tips

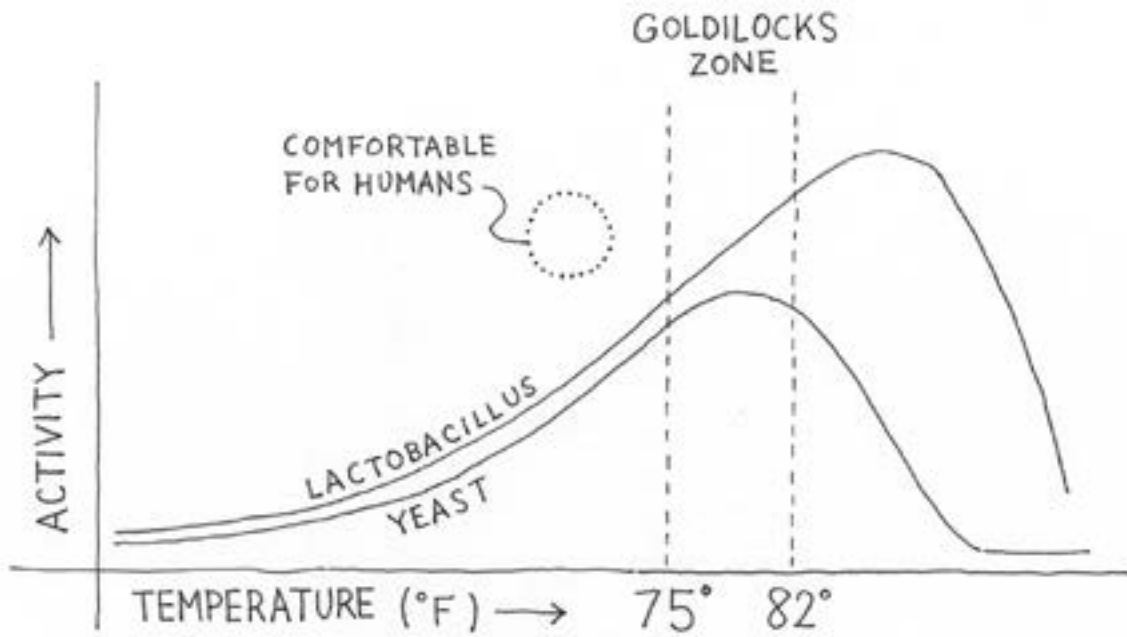
- Always keep some backup starter in the fridge or in a [dehydrated form](#).
- Experiment with the feeding ratio, feeding frequency, flour types and temperatures to get to know your starter.
- Keep your starter jar where you can see it so you remember to feed it.
- Use clean utensils and keep it covered to prevent contamination.
- Pink colors in the starter or any fuzzy molds are a sign of contamination. We recommend tossing, washing your jar well, and replacing it with your backup starter.
- A bit of clear liquid on top is ok. It is a byproduct of fermentation called "hooch". You can stir it in or discard it. It is a sign your starter is hungry and needs feeding.
- A bit of drying on the top of the starter is fine, just give it a stir.

Tip: *When in doubt, try warming it up.*

*- Erik Fabian*

SOURDOUGH YEASTS & BACTERIA ARE MOST ACTIVE  
IN THE GOLDBLOCKS ZONE = 75-82°F / 24-28°C

(they like their homes warmer than we do).



## HOW TO BACKUP A SOURDOUGH STARTER - DRY IT!

Accidents happen. You might use up all the starter you have in your dough. Or some unknown beasties might get introduced to your starter, throwing off the ecosystem. This is why you always want to keep a back-up starter.

The easiest way to create a backup is to dry it.

Take active starter and spread it out on a sheet of parchment paper as thin as possible. Leave it to sit out in a dry environment for a day or two until fully dry. It will look like a cracker. You should hear a snap when you break it.

Fully dried starter will keep for months in a sealed container in the cabinet and indefinitely in a freezer.

### Tips

- Fall and Winter are the best times to make dried starter because the air is dry and there are fewer critters who might be attracted to your project.
- An even easier way to collect small amounts is to set aside the dried starter that got smeared on the lid of your starter jar. A few days worth will give you enough for a backup. The silicone lid on the Sourhouse Starter Jar makes this really easy.

## HOW TO REFRESH DRIED SOURDOUGH STARTER

Refreshing dried starter is sooo easy.

1. Cover a few grams of dried starter with filtered water. 5g of dried starter is plenty, it is powerful stuff. 10-20g of water is enough, if you need a number. Let it soak overnight in a covered container.
2. Next day, add enough unbleached flour to make a thick paste. If you weighed the water the day before, just match the flour weight to the water weight. Stir until there is no dried flour. Cover.
3. You will likely see a few bubbles the next day. Stir in equal parts flour and water. Cover.
4. You should be ready to go. Feed daily by discarding all but a small amount of fresh starter and adding equal amounts of flour and water. This is a basic 1:1:1 feeding ratio.
5. Email us if you have any questions: [support@sourhouse.co](mailto:support@sourhouse.co)

### Tips

- Keep your starter warm. Ideally in the [Goldilocks Zone](#) (75-82°F/24-28°C).
- Use warm (let's call it Goldilocks Water), filtered water.
- Keep it out of direct sunlight.
- Keep enough starter to at least fill the bottom of your starter jar so you can easily judge its rise.
- Scale up the amount of starter in your jar by adding more flour and water in equal proportions when you feed it.

## STARTING WITH A HAND-ME-DOWN STARTER

It is super fun and educational to make your own sourdough starter, but don't let the challenge of making a starter stop you from baking bread.

Many sourdough bakers start with a hand-me-down starter (either fresh or in dried form) and then make their own starter later on when they have more experience. It is fun to hear about the history of other starters. Some bakers like to collect them for their different flavors as much as their different stories.

### Where to find a Starter

- Ask a sourdough baker. We all have more starter than we need and most bakers are happy to share. They probably will share some baking tips to help you get going as well.
- Ask a local sourdough bakery. Some sell their starter, some will just give it away.
- Buy it online. Several brands sell a starter online. You can even try different strains of microbes from different regions.
- Request a bit of starter for free from [Sourhouse](#) or from [Carl's Friends](#)

Here is what to say to a baker: "Hi, I want to give sourdough baking a try. Would you have some extra starter to spare? I can bring my own container if that helps."





## ERIK'S TIP: SIMPLIFY YOUR FIRST LOAVES TO BUILD CONFIDENCE

Sourdough can be intimidating to a new baker because the process seems complex with lots of steps. So I recommend new bakers reduce the complexity of their first loaves so they can build some experience and confidence. Once you have baked a few loaves of bread it becomes apparent that the process can be quite simple but the potential for exploration is vast.

Try all or any of these simplification tricks:

- Don't worry about shaping, make your first loaf a pan loaf or a flat bread
- Just do one stretch and fold, or skip them entirely if you cannot watch the bread during the bulk stage.
- Use all white flour. Bread flour is great. A high protein AP flour like you get from King Arthur or Bob's Red Mill is great too.
- Do learn what "[hydration](#)" means and make low hydration (65-70%) doughs to start.
- Skip the second proof if you like.
- Skip the scoring, bake it seam side up.
- Whatever recipe you choose, bake it several times before trying another to get a feel for the process..

## ERIK'S LEARNING LOAF

400g Bread Flour or AP Flour  
250g Water  
100g Active Sourdough Starter  
10g Oil  
9g Salt



Mix everything together until the dry ingredients are fully incorporated with the liquids. No dry bits should be left in your bowl. Let dough sit covered until it increases 60-100% in size. Roll it into a tubular shape about the length of a greased (and floured) loaf pan. Put your dough in the pan seam side up. Let the dough proof in the pan at room temp for about 45 min. Bake it in a preheated oven at 350°F/177°C until the internal temperature of the loaf is 200-210°F/93-99°C and the top is browned to your liking. Let it cool on a rack before slicing.

A Flatbread Alternative: Skip the pan. Instead, cut off tennis ball sized chunks and press flat. Cook the dough disks on a hot pan until browned and cooked through, flipping once. Experiment with size, thickness and temp to get a fully cooked pita/naan/flatbread of your dreams.

## Phil's Old Faithful Sourdough

Phil is the sourdough baker behind the thoughtful and popular YouTube channel [@CulinaryExplorations](#). If you are ready to try out a dependable country-style sourdough that incorporates new tricks like a levain and lamination then you are ready for Phil's Old Faithful.

He explores the fine points on his website:

<https://www.culinaryexploration.eu/blog/old-faithful>

Mix 21g bread flour, 21g water, and 3g starter into a levain the night before. The next day, mix the levain into 325g water. Mix in 378g bread flour, 45g whole wheat flour and 8g salt so no dry flour is left. Rest for ~30 min covered. Knead on the counter long enough to get even texture. Place in a covered container on the counter to bulk ferment. Lamine the dough three times at 30 min intervals by stretching into a large thin squarish shape and fold in thirds, turn, and fold in thirds again. Allow to bulk until you get about 75% rise. Preshape, rest 15 min, and then shape into your preferred shape. Proof in a sourdough basket on the counter for ~1hr and then in the fridge for 18 hrs. Bake straight from the fridge in a pot, in an oven preheated to 220°C/430°F for 20 min covered and 25 min uncovered. Cool fully before slicing.



## JENNY'S FAVORITE TIP FOR TESTING BULK FERMENTATION

Judging the end of bulk fermentation is perhaps the most important and most difficult part of sourdough baking. It certainly was the sticking point for me. The “poke test” and “jiggle test” both seemed too subjective. Volume increase sounds nice and reliable in theory - but in practice, double volume of a nebulous mass is not at all easy to track.

Then, our baker-friend Marc-André Basile of [The Kettle Black](#) Microbakery in Philly passed on the most amazing tip:

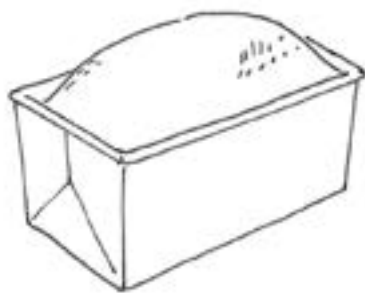
He suggests pinching the dough together with your fingers. If you feel little bubbles popping in the dough, bulk is complete and your dough is ready to shape!



I have adopted this trick ever since, and the loaf comes out wonderful each time.

### KATHLEEN'S ENGLISH MUFFIN BREAD

"It was late one night and I wasn't going to be able to stay up to form and cook the large batch of English Muffins that I'd mixed up. So, when the dough was at the stage for forming, I simply formed it into loaves, placed in a regular bread pan and baked it. I called it my 'English Muffin Bread.' I thought that I'd 'invented' something new, but later learned that there were already recipes for breads with this name. The bread was amazing and just the right size for breakfast toast or a lunch sandwich. Any English Muffin recipe will work for this."



*Kathleen Rodegeb*

## LAURA'S CULTURED BUTTER

Your fermentation skills don't have to stop at bread. Cultured butter is a lightly tangy topping that is lovely on your proudest creations and is a savior of those experimental misfires.

Laura Davidson ([@abeautifulplate](#)) shared a great cultured butter recipe with us.

Mix a quart of heavy cream with a few tablespoons of yogurt (your starter in this case) and some salt. Let the mixture sit at room temp for ~48 hr (warmer = faster) until thick and tangy. Then chill for at least 1 hr in the fridge. Churn by putting it in a mixer or shaking in an enclosed jar until the liquid (buttermilk) and butter fat separate. Strain the buttermilk and save for other uses. Wash the butter fat by repeatedly rising in cold water and then squishing out any liquid in a bowl. Washing makes it firmer and extends its shelf life. Salt your butter now if you like. Stores for a month+ in the fridge.

See pictures and more detail on Laura's website

[abeautifulplate.com](http://abeautifulplate.com)



## WHAT IS "HYDRATION"

*Definition:* Hydration is the % of liquid/flour in a sourdough recipe.

Ex. A recipe with 700g water & 1000g flour = 70% hydration dough.

Don't forget to account for the water and flour in the sourdough starter you add to your dough.

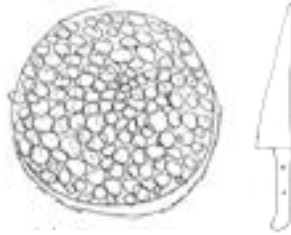
Using hydration transforms a recipe into a formula that can be scaled to any size. You will be able to quickly create new bread formulas or create as many loaves of bread as you like.

And between you and me, hydration is never a perfect number so don't worry if you are off by a few percent. Some days are more humid than others. Sometimes you add a touch of water to help dissolve the salt. It will be ok. Just watch and feel your dough and learn.

## ERIK'S POTLUCK FOCACCIA FORMULA

I typically use whatever dough I have around to make focaccia, but if I wanted to be fussy, I would probably use a bit higher hydration dough (like 80%), and a touch more salt in the basic dough. My ideal focaccia is on the thinner side to maximize the bread-to-toppings ratio. Maybe about 2 inches tall or so when baked.

I learned a simple way to upgrade any focaccia from Nicole ([@nmuvu](#)). Bake it with an infused olive oil! My go-to crowd-pleaser is garlic-infused olive oil.



Here is the basic formula I bring to a potluck and donate to school bake sales based on Nichole's farmers market focaccia.

Mix up a loaf's worth of dough and take it through bulk. You don't have to be so precious about bulk timing with flatbread. Crush and slice several garlic cloves (at least 4) and put in a pan with olive oil. Gently warm the garlic in the oil over a low flame for 5 min but take it off if you see sizzling. Let the oil sit for 30 min at least but use it within a few hours. When your dough is done with bulk, put your garlic oil in your baking pan. I hold back the garlic slices to put on top. Spread out your dough in the pan, flipping to get oil on both sides. Proof until bubbly. Push down with fingertips to create a grid of depressions. Top with your garlic slices, salt and other toppings of your choice. I like using a mix of herbs but my favorite is adding thinly sliced potatoes (that are soaked in the garlic oil), onion, and a sprinkling of smoked paprika.



## PAULINA'S BRIE AND CRANBERRY FOCACCIA

Paulina shared an even more decadent, potluck winning focaccia from her cookbook ["No-Knead Bread Baking"](#).

100g active sourdough starter

500g all purpose flour

12g salt

115g chopped dried cranberries, plus more for topping

400g water, 75° to 80°F

1/4 cup olive oil, divided

1/4 pound Brie, cut into 1/4-inch cubes



Prep the starter: Feed the starter 4 hours before you plan on combining the ingredients. This will ensure the starter is properly active for your baking.

Combine: Once the starter is ready, whisk the flour, salt and cranberries together in a large mixing bowl. Pour the water into a separate vessel, then add the sourdough starter. If the starter is bubbly and happy, it should float on top of the water. (If it doesn't, keep feeding it until it does.) Whisk the water and starter together thoroughly so that you have a milky white liquid.

Mix: Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix everything together until there are no dry bits of flour. Cover the bowl and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.

Stretch and Folds: Over the course of the next 2 hours, perform 3 or 4 rounds of stretch and folds, each separated by 30 to 45 minutes.

Bulk Fermentation: Cover the dough and let sit at room temperature for another 2 hours.

*continued >*

## PAULINA'S BRIE AND CRANBERRY FOCACCIA (continued)

Cold Proof: Move the covered dough bowl into the refrigerator and let the dough rest for 12 hours or up to 36 hours.

Final Proof: Two to three hours before you're ready to bake the focaccia, take the dough out of the refrigerator. Line a rectangular cake or sheet pan with parchment paper and drizzle about 1/4 cup of olive oil on it. Transfer the dough to the pan and press it down to mostly fill the space. Cover the dough and let it rest for about 2 hours (or a little longer if it's very cold outside).

Bake: Preheat the oven to 425°F. Uncover the dough and sprinkle the Brie cubes over the top along with additional cranberries. Drizzle the remaining 1/4 cup of olive oil over the top. With wet or oiled fingers, press into the dough to create the signature focaccia dimples. When the oven is ready, bake the focaccia for 30 to 35 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through.

Cool: Allow the focaccia to cool in the pan for 20 minutes, then transfer it to a wire rack so that it can fully cool. Slice and Enjoy!

*Recipe Tip: Focaccia will keep sliced, in an airtight container at room temperature for several days. After that, I recommend moving it to the refrigerator where it will keep for another week or so.*

Paulina Muratore  
[@nokneadtoworry](https://www.instagram.com/nokneadtoworry)

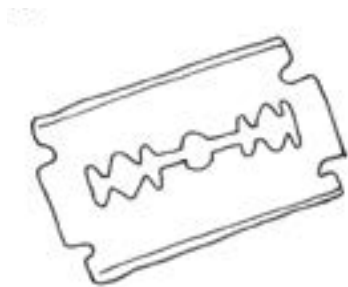
## JOY'S TOP 4 TIPS ON SHAPING & SCORING

1. If you're having issues with properly shaping your loaf, try reducing the hydration of your dough by 5-10%. The less wet dough will be easier to work with, and once you get the hang of it, you can increase your hydration again.

2. The easiest dough to score is well-shaped and cold. After my dough is fully proofed, I shape it, place it into my banneton, cover it with a shower cap, and place it in the fridge overnight. In the morning, I score it quickly and then bake it in my preheated oven while it's still cold.

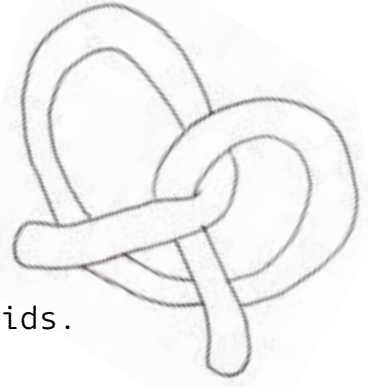
3. You don't need a fancy lame to score bread; if you're careful you can just hold the razor blade with your bare hand. It helps to use a fresh corner, so after I've used a corner I'll mark it with a Sharpie to know not to use it again.

4. For the best looking wheat stalks, score them at a sharp angle that's almost parallel to the stalk and overlap your scores. This way the "leaves" will open up while baking.



Joy Huang  
[@joyosity](https://www.instagram.com/joyosity)

## ERIK'S 5 TIPS FOR BAKING WITH KIDS



It can be a lot of fun to bake with even wee little kids. Here are a few tips to help everyone have fun.

1. Perhaps this is obvious ... make low hydration dough with young kids so the dough (and kids) are easier to handle.
2. Some kids like a mess, some don't (and sometimes we just don't need yet another mess to clean up) so bring the kids into the process that best suits their age and interests. For instance, my son is old enough to measure things but doesn't really like getting messy so he doesn't have much interest in pouring ingredients ... he will help read and manage the scale as we weigh things.
3. The shaping stage is a great time to include kids. My 2 year old and her big brother both love rolling out bagels and pretzels - which are also easier to handle than shaping a boule. Rolling and braiding Brandon's brioche dough with some kids would be a perfect project. Don't be too fussy about the shaping, everything they make will bake up fine and your kids will feel very proud of their work.
4. Rolls are basically mini-loaves that fit kid-sized hands very well. Making a bunch of small rolls instead of a large loaf gives kids more to do (and more practice).
5. Why get a dog when you already have a bread pet! Let your kids help name your starter and do the regular feedings so they can learn and feel ownership over the process.

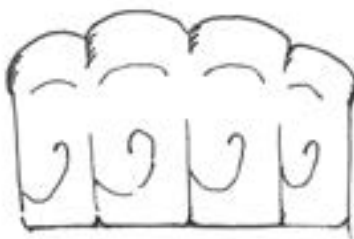


## BRANDON'S SOURDOUGH BRIOCHE

Brioche done well sits on the line between bread and pastry. It is light and fluffy and rich. It makes awesome French Toast and can be braided into holiday breads like Challah.

Brandon Cochran ([@sourdoughbrandon](#)) has a detailed recipe for sourdough brioche on his website: [sourdoughbrandon.com](#). Here is the gist of it.

Mix together 30g sourdough starter, 30g bread flour, and 30g warm water in an empty jar to build a levain and ferment until at least doubled. Mix 58g bread flour with 58g of boiling water to make a Yudane in a bowl. Add the levain, 212 grams bread flour, 27 grams granulated sugar, 5 grams salt, two large eggs and 59 grams whole milk at room temperature. Mix together into a cohesive dough. Add in one stick of room temperature, unsalted butter, in 8 small pieces, one piece at a time. Mix until you have a silky smooth dough that passes a windowpane test. Bulk for 5 hrs (at 78°F/26°C) with one stretch and fold after the 1st hr. Cold proof in the fridge overnight. Punch it down the next day to degas then place into a loaf pan. Proof 5 hrs more in a pan. Brush with an egg wash. Preheat the oven to 400°F/204°C then reduce temp to bake at 350°F/177°C for about 45 min until it hits 195-205°F/91-96°C internal temp. Cool on a rack.



## BRANDON'S PLANT MILK SOURDOUGH BRIOCHE

To make Brandon's brioche dairy-free and vegan, use a vegan butter and plant milk in place of the cow milk. Applesauce replaces the eggs.

Brandon developed a fully vegan version of his brioche using the ingredients below as a part of a collaboration we did with Almond Cow using their Plant Milk Maker. See picture and more detail [here](#).

### Levain:

- 40g active sourdough starter
- 40g bread flour
- 40g water

### Dough:

- 330g bread flour
- 7g salt
- 150g almond milk
- 50g unsweetened apple sauce
- 85g (6 Tbsp) vegan butter, softened
- All of the levain (or 120g of active sourdough starter)

## ERIK'S SANDWICH BREAD THAT COULD BE VEGAN

Having a good sandwich bread recipe in your pocket makes you a hero during lunch time. This is a simple, slightly sweet loaf that children love. I like to bake it in a large Pullman loaf pan with the lid on to get square edges but it can be adjusted for smaller pans. I also enjoy making my own plant milks, usually oat or almond for this recipe. It gives me even more control over the flavor. See the full recipe and conversions for other pan sizes [here](#).

Combine 160g of sourdough starter and 434g of water. Add 600g of all-purpose flour, 200g of einkorn flour, and 17g of salt. Allow the dough to rest for 30 minutes, then add 40g each of oil, oat milk (almond milk works too), and maple syrup, mixing until well incorporated. To develop gluten, perform two sets of stretch-and-folds over the course of an hour.

Let the dough rise by about 50% during bulk fermentation, which can take 4-7 hours depending on the temperature and starter activity. Roll the dough into a loaf and place it in a greased large 13"x4" Pullman pan, then refrigerate overnight for a slow fermentation that enhances flavor and texture.

Preheat the oven to 500°F (260°C), put the pan in, and reduce the heat to 350°F (175°C). Bake until the bread reaches an internal temperature of 200°F (93°C), typically around 40-50 minutes. Once done, cool the bread on a wire rack before slicing and serving.

Note: If using a Pullman pan with a lid on, turn the pan on a new side every 7 minutes for the first 21 minutes to help get a square loaf. Start with the pan in a normal upright position for 7 minutes, then turn it on to its left long side for 7 minutes, and then to the right long side for 7 minutes. Then turn it back upright for the remainder of the bake. Do not flip the pan upside down.

## ELLY'S WHOLE SPELT SOURDOUGH PAN BREAD

Elly Emmett ([www.ellyseveryday.com](http://www.ellyseveryday.com)) is an Australian sourdough baker and soap maker. Her sourdough videos on YouTube ([@EllysEverydayWholegrainSourdough](https://www.youtube.com/@EllysEverydayWholegrainSourdough)) helped guide Erik as he created his first loaves years ago. This is her go-to loaf for bakers wanting to explore whole grain sourdough.

Pics and more details are available at:

<https://www.ellyseveryday.com/ellys-everyday-blog/whole-spelt-sourdough-pan-bread>

Mix together 500g whole spelt flour, ~125g starter and 375g water into a shaggy dough. Rest covered for 1 hour. Mix 50g water and 9g salt. Gently knead your salt water mixture into the dough. Rest the dough for 30 min. Stretch and fold the dough every 30 minutes for the next couple hours. 3-4 folds are enough. When gassy and you hear little popping sounds as you fold, roll dough into a log shape and place in a small greased baking pan (Elly uses a 1.5 liter pan that is 20cm x 10cm x 7.5cm). Proof covered in fridge 12-36 hrs. Bake straight from the fridge in an oven preheated to 210°C/410°F for ~60 min until dark brown. Cool fully before slicing.







## ANDRA'S 7 REASONS YOUR DOUGH IS STICKY

Sticky dough? Andra (@Sourdough\_Explained) wants to help you find the reason why so you can improve your next loaf.

1. The starter - either too young OR inactive OR too acid with not enough yeast activity
2. High hydration doughs
3. The type of flour you are using (e.g rye flour will make the dough stickier than wheat flour)
4. An over-fermented dough by the end of bulk fermentation will make dough sticky and shaping extremely difficult
5. Over-kneading / over-mixing (when using a stand mixer)
6. High ambient temperature so the bulk fermentation happens too fast
7. Insufficient gluten development

If this list helped, you will find more sourdough tips from Andra at [sourdoughexplained.com](https://sourdoughexplained.com)

## EMILY'S 8 TIPS FOR BIGGER BREAD

Emily Jane Buehler is baker with a PhD in Chemistry. She is the author of [Bread Science: the Chemistry and Craft of Making Bread](#). Read the expanded version of these tips here and learn more about her baking classes at [emilybuehler.com](http://emilybuehler.com).

1. Check your ingredients: Ensure that your sourdough starter is at its maximum strength. Water quality and the condition of your flour can also affect the dough's behavior.
2. Check your hydration: Assess the dough's moisture level and adjust it as needed. Wetter dough can lead to larger air pockets but may result in a flatter loaf.
3. Develop more gluten: Kneading and stretch & folds develop gluten, which contributes to the bread's rise. Work the dough more.
4. Warm up your dough: Providing a warm environment for the dough to rise optimizes yeast activity. Aim for a dough temperature around 75 degrees Fahrenheit.
5. Shape tightly: Shaping the dough tightens the outer surface to promote controlled and even rising. Try a series of folds to shape the dough more and more tightly, but don't let it rip.
6. Make sure your oven is hot: A hot oven is the first trick to maximizing oven spring. Try preheating to a hotter temperature than your baking temperature. Keep the oven door closed! Use objects like a pizza stone or cast iron pan to retain and radiate heat.

## EMILY'S 8 TIPS FOR BIGGER BREAD (continued)

7. Make sure your dough is fully proofed: Properly proofed dough allows the heat to penetrate to the center of the loaf, leading to more substantial expansion. Avoid over-proofing, as it can result in a collapsed loaf.
  
8. Use steam: Creating a humid environment delays crust formation, allowing the dough to expand further. Steam can be generated by various methods such as spritzing, pre-steaming the oven, or my favorite ... baking in a covered casserole or Dutch oven.

## ERIK'S EASY SOURDOUGH PIZZA

Sourdough pizza isn't really a style of pizza as much as it is a good life choice. You can make any style of pizza with sourdough, and make it tastier, healthier, and with a better story.

The easiest sourdough pizza is made by taking a bit of whatever ready-to-shape dough you have at hand, spreading it out flat, topping it as you like.

Working with a bit of spelt, rye, or einkorn this week? Yum! Who says an olive bread wouldn't make a good pizza crust! Want to make a calzone? Just flip the half of your pizza over onto itself, pinch it closed along the seam, slit the top and bake. Easy!

Bake thin crusts pizzas for 8-10 min, on a sheet pan (covered with parchment paper) at the highest temp your oven can handle until browned and gooey.

For thick crusts and calzones, give it more time at a lower temp. Maybe 20-25 min at around 450°F/230°C.

You will soon be making extra dough every time you bake just to have extra for dough for pizza night.

You can leave the extra sourdough in the fridge once it is bulked to your liking for 3-4 days. It just develops more flavor.

Do a quick final proof of balls of dough before flattening them or lay it out in a pan like you would make focaccia and proof till bubbly in place.

Eventually the gluten in these fridge doughs start to break down and flatten out a bit more when baked. Does that matter when making a flatbread?

Feel free to push the time your dough stays in the fridge and find your own trade off of flavor and crumb.



### JENNY'S TIP ON USING A WHISK FOR SCOOPING FLOUR

In my baking routine, I use a regular whipping whisk to mix dry white flour and whole wheat flour before adding water. One day, as I was measuring flour into the bowl, I looked at the whisk standing by - and realized I can use the whisk to scoop up flour from the flour bag. You just press the whisk into the flour and make a little whirl to get the flour inside the wires. You lift the whisk up while keeping it vertical, and a chunk of flour will come up with it.

What's nice about this trick is that a whisk can hold a lot more flour than a spoon, and it also allows you to dust in a small amount of flour at a time. Much easier to control than pouring out of the flour bag! I like to dump in the majority of the weight straight from the bag, then do the final touches with a whisk as I watch the number on my scale go up to the target weight.

## MICHAEL'S SOURDOUGH BANANA BREAD

You probably know Michael Hilburn ([@thesourdoughpodcast](#)) from the Sourdough Podcast. He also runs a microbakery in California and shared with us his famous Sourdough Banana Bread recipe.

Pics and more details are available at:

[thesourdoughpodcast.com](https://thesourdoughpodcast.com)

In a large bowl, mash two bananas. Add wet ingredients: 110g oil, 150g sugar, 1 egg, 1 tsp vanilla extract, lemon zest. Beat together until combined. Fold in 250g sourdough starter. Stir in 60g walnuts. In a second bowl, combine: 260g flour, 1 tsp salt, 1 tbsp chia seeds. Add dry ingredients to wet and stir until combined. Lightly, fold in berries if you like. Pour batter into a 9x5in bread pan. Cover and leave out overnight at room temperature. Approx. 7 hours at 80°F/27°C or longer, up to 12 hours, at cooler temperatures. Next morning, the batter should have roughly increased in volume by 1/3. Preheat the oven to 350°F/177°C. Slice 1 banana lengthwise and place the slices on top of the risen batter for decoration. Sprinkle a little sugar on top if you like. Bake until golden brown and the internal temp. of the bread is above 200°F/93°C. Approx. 1 hr.



JENNY'S DISCARD PANCAKE

I don't know if I would have been able to continue my sourdough journey if it wasn't for this discard pancake. It's something you can enjoy while you hone your bread baking skills. This recipe doesn't require any additional flour, so it will clear out your discard container fast!

(serving size 2) Mix batter ingredients according to the list below. Batter will expand up to double or so, so make sure the bowl is big enough to hold that. Heat up a pan, spread some oil or butter, then pour half of the batter in. Watch the bubbles rise and pop. Flip the pancake and let it get golden on the underside. Cook another with the rest of the batter. Serve pancakes on plates, and top with anything your heart desires.

Savory

1 cup starter discard

1/8 to 1/4 tsp baking soda (less = chewy, more = fluffy)

a pinch of salt

Our household favorite toppings include avocado, smoked salmon, ricotta and even arugula tossed in dressing. Further customization is also easy - mix chopped scallion to the batter, for example. Goes great with some sriracha and fried egg. The chewy batter works especially nice for this.

Sweet

1 cup starter discard

1/4 tsp baking soda

1 egg

a pinch of salt

a pinch of sugar

This batter makes flat (think Swedish pancake) yet porous structure that soaks up maple syrup real nice! Highly recommend mascarpone and berries for toppings.

MARY'S SOURDOUGH CRACKERS

Need another use for extra starter discard? Mary Grace Quigley, an Adelaide-based homebaker, is here to save you! This is a summary of the sourdough discard cracker recipe in her new cookbook *Such Good Bread*. Learn more about Mary and her books at [marygracebread.com.au](http://marygracebread.com.au) and [@marygracebread](https://www.instagram.com/marygracebread) on Instagram.

Makes two trays, approx. one medium sized jar of crackers.

Mix together 100g sourdough discard, 50g room temp butter, 6g salt, 50g poppy seeds, 50g flax seeds, 20g sunflower seeds, and 150g water. Then add the 100g wholemeal (whole wheat to us yanks) and 100g white flours. Mix until well incorporated.

Let sit for about 20-30 min. While the dough rests, preheat your oven to 190°C/375°F and cut parchment paper to the size of your baking tray(s). Then divide the dough into two equal (~315g) balls. Roll out one dough ball thinly and evenly across a sheet of parchment paper to make a giant cracker to break up later. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt and roll salt gently into dough. Repeat with the second dough ball or save it in the fridge and bake it a day or two later. It will develop a more sour flavor during this time. To make sure they bake evenly, bake each giant cracker individually at 190°C/375°F for 30-45 min till golden. Flip if you like. Briefly cool and then have fun breaking the giant cracker into smaller chunks to create delicious, rustic sourdough crackers. Store in an airtight jar and enjoy with dips, cheeses and pickles.





EVIRA'S SOURDOUGH DISCARD BROWNIES

Elvira (@ellecticiously) is a sourdough home baker & fermentation enthusiast. She has posted this drool-worthy sourdough discard brownie recipe before on instagram but here is the recipe for the first time. You can see how hers turns out [here](#).

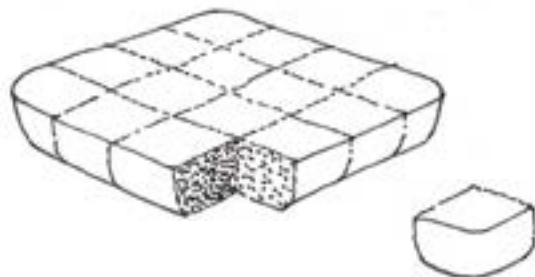
Preheat your oven to ~350°F/170°C and line a square 9" x 9" baking dish with parchment paper.

In a pan, melt 180g of dark chocolate, 50g of unsalted butter, and 60g of canola oil until smooth. Once melted, let it cool slightly.

In a bowl, beat 2 eggs, 1 egg white, 100g of granulated sugar, 80g of brown sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon of salt until light and thick. Then gently stir in 40g of dutched cocoa powder (sifted if lumpy) and 120g of sourdough discard.

Fold in the cooled chocolate butter mixture to the bowl.

Pour the batter into the prepared baking pan and bake until a tester comes out with moist crumbs still attached, about 30 to 40 minutes. Do not overbake the brownies as they will continue to bake once they're out of the oven. Cool completely before removing them from the pan. Once they've cooled, cut them into squares and serve.



## JENNY'S GUIDE ON HOW TO HOST A SOURDOUGH DAY

Do you have a few friends who are curious to try making sourdough? Invite them over for a "sourdough day". Since sourdough baking is at least a day-long process, take your friends along the journey while devouring delicious sourdough things you make along the way!

### Menu Example:

Brunch: Sourdough discard Dutch baby with mascarpone & maple syrup.

Dinner: Sourdough bread, root veggie soup, paté and spreadable cheese

### Tips:

- Pick a classic, simple bread recipe that you know well.
- Make the main course of the dinner something to highlight your bread - maybe something you can dip the bread into - such as hearty soup or steamed mussels.
- If you are hosting by yourself, pick a dish you can prepare the night before. Soup is excellent for this reason. You can round out the meal with items you can spread on bread - such as brie cheese, mousse paté or pesto. You can ask your guests to bring over these additions, too!
- If you have helping hands, delegate the non-bread side of things to them so you can focus on the dough and your guests - trust me, that's already a lot!
- For brunch, look for a dish you can batch process to efficiently serve a group of people - this is why I recommend Dutch baby over pancakes.

## JENNY'S GUIDE ON HOW TO HOST A SOURDOUGH DAY (continued)

One challenge of walking through the sourdough baking process is that it takes a long time. If you show each step in order you might have to host a sleepover! So here is a timetable I used to fit every step into one day.

### The Day Before

---

Prep **LOAF A**. This is the loaf you use to show the baking process and eat for dinner. Mix the dough, bulk proof it, shape it and let it cold-ferment in your fridge.

Make a big pot of soup, and put it in the fridge.

### The Day Of

---

8:00am Feed your starter so it will peak around 12:00pm.

10:30am Guests arrive. Welcome them in. Show the state of your starter, tell them it's still rising and they will see it even taller by the time you start mixing the dough.

11:00am Make & enjoy starter discard Dutch baby for brunch.

12:00pm Start **LOAF B**. This is the loaf your guests will see from mixing to shaping. Show the starter at its peak state. Mix the dough. Point out what the dough looks like and feels like at this stage.

12:30pm Feed the remaining starter. Make enough to share with your friends at the end of the day. Walk them through the idea of "use some for dough, feed the rest" cycle. Talk about starter discard & general starter maintenance.

1:00 - 3:00pm Stretch & fold **LOAF B**. Take turns, let your guest experience the change in dough texture over time.

## JENNY'S GUIDE ON HOW TO HOST A SOURDOUGH DAY (continued)

3:00pm Bake **LOAF A**. Take the shaped dough out of the fridge. Show your whole baking routine from pre-heating, scoring, how you place the dough onto your bakeware. Share what you look for to judge when the bread is done.

Later...When loaf is done Let the loaf cool on a rack. Explain how bread finishes baking while cooling

6:30pm Heat up the soup you made the night before. Set table.

7:00pm Dinner time! Slice **LOAF A**, serve the soup, spread the cheese, enjoy.

8:30pm Shape **LOAF B**. Let your guests touch & feel the dough so they can see what it is supposed to be at the end of bulk fermentation. Show how you shape the dough. Let your guest have a go at it. Place in banneton.

9:00pm Wrapping up - If your friends live nearby, let them take the **LOAF B** dough home, so they can bake it themselves the next day. (If not, place it in your fridge to bake it yourself.)

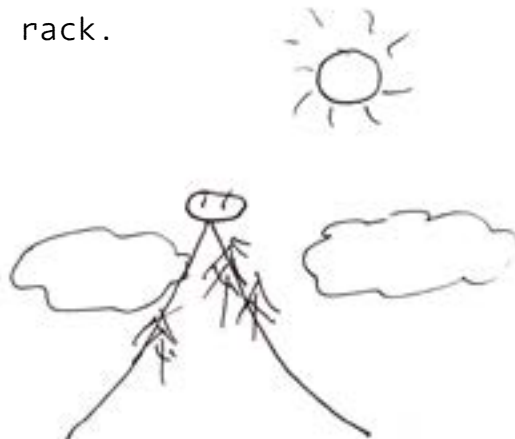
Don't forget to send your friends home with a bit of your starter, and whatever bread you may have left. Share with them your favorite way to keep bread fresh.

9:30pm Pat yourself (and your hosting partner) on the back for hosting a great sourdough day!

## HEATHER'S HOW TO BAKE SOURDOUGH AT HIGH ALTITUDE

Erik's Note: Elevation changes how sourdough behaves. When I moved to the mountains of Asheville, NC, I gained 2000' in elevation and suddenly everything started over-proofing. I turned to Heather Carrier (Founder of the Sourdough Mamas Facebook Group) for help and she encouraged me to use moderate hydration doughs and to anticipate faster proofing. Heather bakes at even higher elevations in Colorado. Here is the gist of it ...

Make a levain from 100g flour, 100g water and 50g starter. Ferment then mix in 650g water and then 900g flour. Rest 30min. Knead in 22g salt and 50g water. The high-elevation bulk fermentation takes 2.5 - 3 hours. During the first two hours of the bulk fermentation, the dough must be folded six times, or every 20 minutes. Then rest your dough for another 30-60 minutes. Gently divide and shape into 3 loaves. Do a second proof in bowls or bannetons for 3-4 hrs on the counter or overnight in the fridge. Preheat the oven to 500°F. Score and bake each loaf at 475°F for 30 min covered and 15 min uncovered. Cool on a rack.



## WHAT IS "RISE TIME"

*Definition:* Rise Time is how long a starter takes to peak after each feeding.

Sourdough starter's Rise Time is affected by:

1. Feeding ratio of Starter : Water : Flour
2. Type of flour
3. Starter temperature
4. A starter's unique yeast & bacteria composition
5. Time since the starter was last fed
6. A starter's maturity

Knowing your starter's Rise Time is foundational to putting your starter on a schedule.

## FIND YOUR STARTER'S RISE TIME IN ONE DAY

You are 1 day away from understanding your starter.

Split your starter into 2 jars. Feed one at 1:1:1 ratio and the other at 1:2:2.

Do everything else as normal. If you keep your starter on the counter, feed it there. If you keep it in your fridge, feed the cold starter fresh from the fridge as if you are preparing to bake.

Note the room temperature, how long it takes for each starter to peak, and how long it holds its peak. The results are the basics of your starter's unique Rise Time. Now you can plan your bake day more precisely.

Try tracking your Rise Time at different ratios and temperatures to learn even more.

A ratio that peaks overnight is particularly handy - it allows you to mix your dough first thing in the morning.

Use the [next page](#) to record your Rise Time--->

RISE TIME FOR \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME OF YOUR STARTER

ST : W : FL	Temp	Peaks in...	Holds peak for...
1 : 1 : 1	°	HRS	HRS
1 : 2 : 2	°	HRS	HRS
1 : :	°	HRS	HRS
1 : :	°	HRS	HRS
1 : :	°	HRS	HRS
1 : :	°	HRS	HRS
1 : :	°	HRS	HRS
1 : :	°	HRS	HRS
1 : :	°	HRS	HRS



## GOLDIE + PEAK-TO-PEAK FEEDING = SUPER ACTIVE STARTER

Feeding your starter peak-to-peak maximizes the strength of your starter. It is helpful to do this a few times when preparing to bake. The problem is you can only get so many feeds in before it is time to bake. Or if you're like me (Jenny) who gets too absorbed in trying to ramp it up, your bake day turns into *bake week* before you notice!

Goldie (you know, the little starter warmer we created) helps your starter rise faster by warming it to the Goldilocks zone, which allows you to sneak in an extra feed or two within the same day.

Track your starter's Rise Time in Goldie using a 1:1:1 ratio (starter:water:flour) to get your baseline. See how many peak-to-peak feeds you can fit into a day. Then, experiment with different ratios to find which one gives you a full night's sleep to wake up to a peaked starter.

Once you figure out your numbers, the rest is easy. Goldie keeps the feed-to-peak time consistent throughout the year, so you can rely on your favorite feeding routine to work every time you bake.

### Tip

Erik and Jenny like to just write down "G" instead of numbers for the temperature, to indicate the starter was in the Goldilocks Zone!



Super active  
starter!

Tip : *Don't worry about what your crumb looks like.  
If it tastes good, it's perfect.*

*- Sue Green*

## SOURDOUGH BAKING TOOLS - BUYING GUIDE

You can likely start baking perfectly tasty sourdough bread with tools you have in your kitchen now.

All you need is a bowl, measuring cups or a scale, a towel, a knife/razor blade and something to bake on like a cookie sheet/roaster/dutch oven/bread pan. You will also need a container to keep your starter.

Once you have a few loaves of bread under your belt, here is a list of what you might consider buying next to improve your bread and make baking easier.

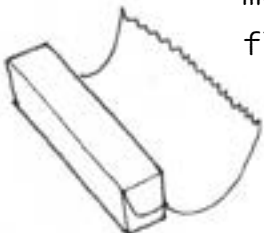
1. **KITCHEN SCALE:** A digital kitchen scale is essential to measure the ingredients accurately by weight. It's important to get a good quality scale that can measure in grams or ounces. If you don't have one, this is the first thing to buy.



2. **DOUGH SCRAPER:** This tool is helpful for scraping the dough off the bowl and surface when kneading and shaping the dough. You can get a plastic scraper for a few dollars.



3. **PARCHMENT PAPER:** Parchment paper is used to transfer the shaped dough to the baking sheet without sticking. You can buy a roll of parchment paper for a few dollars. In the meantime, you can dust your baking sheet with cornmeal or flour.



*continued >*

## SOURDOUGH BAKING TOOLS - BUYING GUIDE (continued)

When you hit a plateau and are ready to upgrade your kit further, the next purchase would be either a thermometer, dutch oven/roaster or a Goldie.

1. PROBE THERMOMETER: Understanding temperature is key to making great loaves consistently. You can use a probe thermometer to help judge when your bread is finished baking, to understand the temperature of your room, starter and dough.



2. DUTCH OVEN OR ENAMEL ROASTER: A Dutch oven, or roaster is used to bake your bread and to create a humid environment during the first stages of baking. This will give you more oven spring.



3. GOLDIE BY SOURHOUSE: When you are ready to keep your starter on a schedule and to keep it most active, Goldie provides a warm, safe home for your starter.

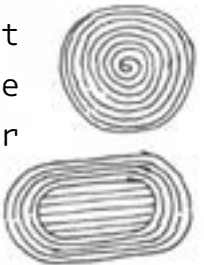


### Nice to have

1. STARTER JAR: Any jar will hold a starter, but some are better than others. Using a jar designed for sourdough starter will make feeding, rise tracking and clean-up easier.



2. BANNETON OR PROOFING BASKET: A banneton or proofing basket is used to hold the dough as it proofs and helps shape the dough into a round or oblong shape. You can use a colander or a bowl lined with a floured towel as a makeshift proofing basket.



3. RAZOR BLADES (and maybe a lame for holding a blade) is the easiest way to score your bread. A sharp knife will work in the meantime.



4. ROBUST OVEN MITTS. Once you start handling 500°F dutch oven lids regularly you might want something more robust than the typical pot holder.



GIVE YOUR STARTER A GOLDIE

Get a Community Cookbook discount  
on an order of Sourhouse products at [sourhouse.co](http://sourhouse.co)  
using this secret [link](#).



## THANKS

Big thanks to our readers who stepped up  
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Brandon, @sourdoughbrandon

Elly Emmett, [www.ellyseveryday.com](http://www.ellyseveryday.com)

Elvira, @elleciously

Emily Jane Buehler, [emilybuehler.com](http://emilybuehler.com)

Erik Fabian, [sourhouse.co](http://sourhouse.co)

Heather Currier, [Sourdough Mamas](http://Sourdough Mamas)

Jennifer Yoko Olson, [sourhouse.co](http://sourhouse.co)

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Kathleen Rodegeb

Laura Davidson, @abeautifulplate

Mary Grace Quigley, @marygracebread

Michael Hilburn, @thesourdoughpodcast

Paulina Muratore, @nokneadtoworry

Phil, @culinaryexplorations

Sue Green

## ABOUT SOURHOUSE

Sourhouse envisions a world where people gather daily to share homemade sourdough bread and other fermented foods.

We design objects that become the center of daily rituals in the kitchen and an expression of their personal identity.

We make experiences that create platforms for people to gather, share and learn.

Sourhouse is a collaboration by a pair of sourdough home bakers: Erik Fabian and Jennifer Yoko Olson.

Website: [Sourhouse.co](http://Sourhouse.co)

Instagram: [@lifeatSourhouse](https://www.instagram.com/lifeatSourhouse)

Email: [hello@sourhosue](mailto:hello@sourhosue)

Stockist: [DeliverDeli](https://www.DeliverDeli.com)

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