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SOURDOUGH EVERYTHING



*Sweet and Savory Recipes for
Beautiful Breads and Other Bakes*



Baking Tools

The beauty of sourdough is its simplicity. All you really need are the basic ingredients: flour, water, and salt (and sometimes eggs, butter, and sugar for enrichment); and the basic tools: a bowl and an oven. However, there are a few tools that can greatly simplify the process.

Banneton

A banneton helps the dough stay in a specific shape while it finishes proofing. A simple bowl can do the trick; however, a banneton will help prevent moisture from developing on the dough, which can result in a wet dough that is more difficult to score. I have tried cane, wicker, and rope bannetons, and they all work well for proofing sourdough. A round banneton will make a boule, and an oval banneton will make a batard.

Bench scraper

A solid, stainless-steel bench scraper makes shaping bread much easier. When making high-hydration loaves, using a bench scraper to help shape the dough is often easier (and less sticky) than using your hands. It also helps you cut and divide the dough into portions.

Bowl covers with polyurethane backs

A bowl cover is an easy and reusable tool you can use to proof your dough. Bowl covers with polyurethane backs help ensure the dough will not form a skin due to the surface being exposed to air. (I love my Wild Clementine bowl covers.)

Bread lame

A bread lame makes sourdough scoring much easier. You'll want to score (cut) dough prior to baking to help the loaf expand. The dough will expand at its weakest point when you bake it, and cutting the dough with a bread lame (or a very sharp knife) will create that point of expansion. There are several types of bread lames available, but I prefer one that allows me to get as close to the dough as possible when performing decorative scores. (I use a Wire Monkey UFO lame with a sharp razor blade for scoring.)

Digital scale

If there is one tool I recommend for any baker, it's a digital scale. Digital scales offer the precision necessary for making sourdough bread and feeding your starter. While cup measures may seem simpler, a cup of flour can vary in weight from 120 grams (spooned and leveled) to 200 grams (packed). It's for this reason that

the precision of a digital scale is also essential when feeding your sourdough starter. If you're making a 100%-hydration starter, you will need to have a feeding ratio of 1:1 by weight, and a scale offers this level of precision since one cup of flour is not equal to one cup of water. You will find that most sourdough recipes use grams when measuring ingredients.

Digital thermometer

A digital thermometer allows accurate measurement of the internal temperature of loaves to ensure they are fully baked. While you can knock on the bottom of a regular sourdough loaf to see if it is fully baked (if it sounds hollow, it is baked), enriched loaves require the precision of a thermometer to ensure you do not underbake the loaves.

Dutch oven or equivalent cast-iron bread cloche

While using a cast-iron bread cloche is not essential, it does ensure the containment of steam that results in a good rise (or oven spring) on a basic, non-enriched sourdough loaf. When baking sourdough, steam allows the loaf to fully expand. If steam is not introduced at the beginning stage of baking, a hard crust will form on the loaf, preventing the loaf from reaching its full expansion potential. Some people bypass the use of a cast-iron cloche by "open baking" in the oven and keeping a tray of water at the bottom of the oven. I have had varying degrees of success using this method simply because my oven cannot contain the steam. I always found best success when using my Fourneau Grande bread oven. The Fourneau Grande allows me to do my 7-minute score (p. 219) without having to lift a heavy Dutch oven in and out of the oven.

Loaf pan

If you're making a sandwich loaf, a formed brioche, or even a formed sourdough loaf, a loaf pan will be necessary. I have a Pullman loaf pan with a lid, as well as several open-top loaf pans. My preferred size of Pullman loaf pan is 8.5 × 4.75 × 4.375-inches (22 × 12 × 11cm), and it's the size that I use in several recipes in this book.

Silicone or plastic bowl scraper

A flexible silicone or plastic bowl scraper helps you cleanly gather dough from the sides of a bowl and incorporate any bits that would otherwise be left behind. It keeps your dough mass together, minimizes waste, and makes cleanup so much easier.



Total time: 30 hours
Active prep time:
55 minutes
Baking time: 15-17 minutes
Makes: 6 large or
8 medium rolls

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Stand mixer fitted with a
dough hook (optional)
Bench scraper
Bread lame or razor blade

INGREDIENTS

225g any type of milk
(I use 2%)
190g 100%-hydration active
sourdough starter
25g granulated sugar
8g fine sea salt
400g all-purpose flour
40g unsalted butter,
softened and divided
1 medium egg

Pain Viennois

Pain Viennois (Vienna bread), traditionally from Austria, is a soft, slightly sweet loaf that makes the perfect base for submarine sandwiches. Unlike your typical French baguette, this naturally leavened version has a tender crumb, a hint of sweetness, and a pillowy texture.

Make and proof the dough (25-30 minutes active, 4-10 hours bulk proof at room temperature, overnight cold proof)

1. In a medium bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer, combine the milk, starter, sugar, salt, and flour. Knead on low or mix by hand until fully combined, about 5 minutes.
2. Add half the butter and knead on low until fully combined. Add the remaining butter and knead on low for 20 minutes. (You may also knead the dough by hand for around 30 minutes instead.) Place the dough in a medium bowl and cover with a bowl cover or plastic wrap. Proof at room temperature until it has doubled in volume. (This may take 4 to 10 hours depending on the ambient room temperature.)
3. Place the covered dough in the refrigerator for an overnight cold proof.

Shape and final proof (10 minutes active, 3-8 hours final proof)

1. The next morning, prepare a baking sheet by lining it with parchment paper.
2. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and, using a bench scraper, divide it into six pieces for large-size rolls or eight pieces for medium-size rolls.
3. Flatten each dough piece and then, using your hands, roll it up into a log shape about 7 to 8 inches (18 to 20cm) long. Place each dough piece on the prepared baking sheet.
4. Whisk the egg in a small bowl. Brush the dough pieces with half the egg wash. Using a bread lame or razor blade, carefully score along each log about 10 to 15 times. Cover the dough loosely with plastic wrap and allow to proof until puffy and doubled in size. (This may take 3 to 8 hours depending on the ambient room temperature.)

Bake and store the rolls (15-17 minutes)

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C).
2. Brush the logs with the remaining egg wash. Bake for 15 to 17 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 195°F (91°C). Let the rolls cool on a wire rack for 30 minutes before slicing.
3. Store the rolls at room temperature in a resealable bag for up to 3 days or freeze in an airtight container or freezer bag for up to 2 months.

Total time: 42 hours
Active prep time:
1 hour 15 minutes
Baking time: 16-20 minutes
Makes: 16 buns

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
Stand mixer fitted with a
dough hook (optional)

INGREDIENTS

Sweet, stiff starter
50g unfed 100%-hydration
sourdough starter
66g tap water
20g granulated sugar
120g all-purpose flour

Dough
160g tap water
160g any type of milk
(I use 2%)
All of the sweet stiff starter
115g granulated sugar
3 medium eggs, divided
8g sea salt
600g bread flour
Zest from 3 lemons
4g ground cardamom
100g unsalted butter,
softened

Topping
Poppy seeds (optional)

Lemon Cardamom Buns

Soft, fragrant, and perfectly sweet, these buns combine the bright citrus flavor of lemon zest with the warm spice of cardamom. Enjoy these with a pat of butter for breakfast or with some drizzled honey or a spoonful of lemon curd for a sweet finish. A sweet sourdough starter adds depth and complexity, making them a delightful treat for any occasion.

Prepare the sweet stiff starter (5 minutes, 12 hours rise)

1. Prepare the sweet stiff starter the night before making the dough by mixing all starter ingredients together in a 1-liter (34fl oz) container. Cover the starter with plastic wrap and let it rise until at peak or has just started to fall, at least 12 hours.

Make and proof the dough (30 minutes active, 4-8 hours bulk proof at room temperature, overnight cold proof)

1. The next morning, in a medium bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer, combine the water, milk, starter, sugar, 2 eggs, salt, flour, lemon zest, and ground cardamom. Mix on low for 10 minutes. Alternatively, knead by hand for 15 minutes until the ingredients are fully incorporated.
2. Gradually add the butter to the dough, 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time, and knead until the butter is fully incorporated after each addition. Knead by hand or in the stand mixer for 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. Cover the dough with a bowl cover or plastic wrap and let it rest for 1 hour.
3. (Optional step for gluten development for a more shreddable crumb. If you wish to skip this step, proceed to step 4.) Once 1 hour has elapsed, perform a coil fold (p. 35). Perform two more coil folds in 30-minute intervals.
4. Cover the dough with a bowl cover or plastic wrap and allow the dough to proof at room temperature until it has doubled in volume. (This may take 4 to 8 hours depending on the ambient room temperature.) Place the covered dough in the refrigerator for an overnight cold proof.

Shape and final proof (40 minutes active, 4-6 hours final proof)

1. The next morning, line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Use a bench scraper to divide the cold dough into sixteen equal-size portions. Gently shape each portion into a round bun, dusting with additional flour if needed to avoid sticking. Optionally, you can tie these loosely with 3 strands of butcher's twine to create a pumpkin shape.
3. Arrange the shaped buns on the baking sheets, leaving space for expansion. Cover with a tea towel and proof at room temperature until doubled in size, puffy, and a finger-poke test reveals a slow return of the dough. (This may take 4 to 6 hours depending on the ambient room temperature.)

Bake and store the buns (16-20 minutes)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Whisk the remaining egg in a small bowl. Use a pastry brush to brush the buns with the egg wash, then sprinkle the poppy seeds (if using) over the tops of the buns.
3. Bake for 16 to 20 minutes or until the buns are golden brown and their internal temperature reaches 195°F (91°C). Cool the buns on a wire rack.
4. Store at room temperature in a resealable bag for up to 3 days or in an airtight container or freezer bag for up to 2 months.



Total time: 2 hours
Active prep time:
1 hour 35 minutes
Baking time: 18–22 minutes
Makes: 12 turnovers

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Pastry cutter (optional)
¼-inch (2cm) small circle
or heart-shaped cookie
cutter (optional)

INGREDIENTS

Dough

250g all-purpose flour
25g granulated sugar
4g sea salt
250g cold, unsalted butter,
cut into 1-inch (2.5cm)
cubes
75g tap water
75g 100%-hydration
sourdough starter
(at peak or discard)
2g apple cider vinegar
1 medium egg, beaten
(for egg wash)

Filling

450g fresh strawberries,
stems removed and
halved
70g granulated sugar
Juice of half a lemon
15g cornstarch

Strawberry glaze

60g confectioners' sugar
30g any type of milk
(I use 2%)
70g reserved filling juice
Pinch of salt

Flaky Strawberry Turnovers

These sourdough discard turnovers feature flaky, buttery pastry wrapped around a sweet strawberry filling and finished with a gorgeous pink glaze. Whether you're serving them fresh out of the oven for a brunch, or packing them up for a portable afternoon snack, these turnovers always deliver layers of flaky goodness and delicious jammy filling.

Make the dough (30 minutes active, 2 hours refrigerator)

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt. Add the butter cubes and toss to coat. Use a pastry cutter or two butter knives to cut the butter into the flour until pea-size pieces remain. Use your fingers to flatten any large chunks of butter.
2. In a small bowl, stir together the water, starter, and apple cider vinegar. One spoonful at a time, add this liquid to the flour mixture, while mixing by hand just until a shaggy dough forms. (Avoid overmixing!)
3. On a floured surface, roll the dough out into a 10 × 20-inch (25 × 51cm) rectangle. Fold it into thirds, like a letter. Roll out again to the same size and then fold into thirds once more. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate it for 30 minutes.
4. Repeat the folding process two more times, with a 30-minute rest in the refrigerator after each fold.
5. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and place it in the refrigerator while making the filling.

Make the filling (15 minutes active, 40 minutes refrigerator)

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the strawberries, sugar, lemon juice, and cornstarch. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, until bubbly and thickened, about 4 to 5 minutes.
2. Scoop out 70 grams of the filling juice and set it aside for the glaze.
3. Place the remaining filling in the refrigerator to cool.

Assemble and bake the turnovers (30 minutes)

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (205°C). Prepare a baking sheet by lining it with parchment paper.
2. Use a rolling pin to roll the chilled dough out into a 14 × 18-inch (36 × 46cm) rectangle and then use a sharp knife to trim the edges for uniformity. Cut the rectangle into 12 smaller, equal-size rectangles that are each about 3 × 7 inches (8 × 18cm).
3. Using a circle cookie cutter or heart cookie cutter, cut out the dough in the middle of the upper half of each rectangle. (Alternatively, you can use a knife to cut slits on the upper half of each rectangle, leaving a ½-inch [1.25cm] border of uncut dough.) Place two tablespoons of the strawberry filling on the lower half, then fold the top half over to cover the filling. Brush the edges with the egg wash, press them together with your fingers, then crimp them with a fork.
4. Place the turnovers on the baking sheet. Brush them with the remaining egg wash.
5. Bake in the preheated oven for 18 to 22 minutes or until golden brown. Let them cool slightly before glazing.



Make the glaze and store the turnovers (5 minutes)

1. In a small bowl, mix the confectioners' sugar and milk until smooth. Add the reserved filling juice and salt, and stir until fully combined.
2. Drizzle or spread the glaze over the warm turnovers. Serve warm and enjoy!
3. Store any unglazed turnovers in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 days or freeze in an airtight container for up to 2 months. Reheat in an oven preheated to 335°F (170°C) for 10 minutes.

Creating Three-Dimensional Paint Designs

For those who love to express their artistic side, sourdough can become your canvas in the most delicious way possible. This particular technique transforms ordinary loaves into stunning works of edible art, using a method remarkably similar to Mehndi (henna) artistry—where thickened ink flows through fine openings in specially shaped cones.

The process is simple: Create a colored paste by mixing edible powder with water and flour or mixing flour, water, and gel food coloring. Transfer the paste to a piping bag, and pipe your design directly onto frozen bread dough. As the bread bakes, your artwork becomes permanently etched into the crust, creating a striking three-dimensional pattern that makes each loaf a unique masterpiece.

While this decorative technique is purely aesthetic and entirely optional for successful sourdough making, it offers the perfect opportunity to elevate your baking and satisfy your creative impulses. Whether you're looking to impress guests, explore a new artistic medium, or simply add beauty to your daily bread, three-dimensional painting opens up endless possibilities for personal expression.

Equipment:

Cookie cutter (optional)
Toothpick or scribe
Piping bag or zipper-lock bag
Bread lame
Scissors (optional)

Ingredients (powder-based color):

10g edible powder (rice flour, black cocoa powder, turmeric powder, purple sweet potato powder, blue matcha powder, blue spirulina powder, edible luster dust, butterfly pea powder, red dragon fruit powder)
10g all-purpose flour
20–25g tap water (start with 20g and add more as needed)

Ingredients (gel-based color for more vibrancy):

17g all-purpose flour
20g tap water
Gel food coloring (quantity to match desired vibrancy)



1. Find a design that you want to replicate on your dough.
2. Place your dough in the freezer for 1 hour.
3. For powder-based color: Sift the flour and the edible powder together into a small bowl. Slowly add the water, mixing until smooth. (Start with 20 grams of water and increase a few drops at a time until you get a loose, toothpaste-like consistency that is pipeable but not runny.) Let the mixture sit for 5 to 10 minutes to hydrate fully and thicken slightly. For gel-based color: mix together the flour, water, and gel food coloring. Pour the mixture into a disposable piping bag or zipper-lock bag. Cut 1 mm to 1.5 mm (about 1/16 inch) from the tip of the piping bag or the corner of the zipper-lock bag.
4. Remove the dough from the freezer and turn it out onto parchment paper. If desired, use a cookie cutter to create a pattern (see image 1).
5. Use a toothpick or scribe to draw the outline of the design onto the surface of the dough (see image 2).
5. Pipe the design carefully onto the dough (see image 3). (The dough will be quite cold, so the piped design will set quickly.)
6. Create an expansion score (see image 4). Bake according to the recipe instructions.





Creating amazing sourdough is deceptively simple—it's part science and part craft—but it all starts with three basic ingredients: flour, water, and salt. And the result is something truly magical.

Slow down and savor the experience of creating inspiring sourdough that your family and friends will love to share. Experienced home baker and Canadian sourdough influencer Rachel Pardoe is known for creating breads that are not only flavorful, but also a feast for the eyes. Rachel will teach you, step by step, how to measure, ferment, and shape dough—and help you jump start your sourdough journey with an array of versatile, inspired recipes that range from artfully crafted breads to irresistible buns, sweet rolls, and pastries.



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