

## **BASIC SOURDOUGH LOAF**

Over time you will come to a routine of making sourdough that works for you.

Many people manage the whole process in one day, but I find it easier to prep it all on one day (I make four loaves per week), package the dough into separate bags to put into the fridge overnight (this is “retarding the dough”), and then bake the dough either the next day or the day after.

This allows me plenty of freedom, as I manage my sourdough baking routine around other activities that require me to leave the house in-between the steps outlined below.



### **DAY 1**

#### **STEP 1 - ACTIVATE STARTER (allow 4 to 9 hours depending on weather)**

Remove your starter from the fridge (I always have 300g starter in my container in the fridge ... see STEP 3 for more detail) and add:

- 80g rye flour (I use light rye)
- 120g filtered water

... and stir vigorously.

**Put starter aside until it is bubbly and active ... this will take 4 to 9 hours** and will have doubled in size. If it is very cold then I place the starter somewhere that it is warmer (on top of the fridge, under exhaust lights on your hotplates, etc.) as this helps to create enough warmth for the starter to activate in about 6 hours.

Once the starter is bubbly and active it is ready to use (the mix will have risen in the container and will generally double in size, and air bubbles will be visible within the mix and it will look creamy and fluffy).



**NB:** Once the starter has activated you will have enough starter to make up to 4 small loaves (using 340g Mackies baking tins), with roughly 120g to 150g starter leftover to feed and return to the fridge for your next bake.

### **STEP 2 – USE YOUR STARTER**

Before you start making your dough, place a plastic freezer bag on your bench (one for each loaf you are making) and spray with olive oil. For each loaf of bread add to your TM bowl (or bowl if doing by hand) in this order:

80g	rye starter
240g	filtered water at room temperature (you can add whey if you have any ... helps to make the bread “softer” ... ensure it is at room temperature too)
400g	white spelt flour or a good quality unbleached bakers flour
1 tsp	fine grade sea salt

*You can add a combination of wholemeal and white flours, but the loaf will take longer to rise and will be of a firmer consistency ... I would not recommend that you use more than 1:1 ratio wholemeal to white otherwise your loaf will be quite heavy ... a good ratio is 100g wholemeal to 300g white, but as you start to play around with your dough you can try whatever combination you like.*

- 1. Knead dough for 30 seconds**
2. Turn the TM bowl upside down and allow dough to drop onto the lightly oiled freezer bag ... remove the last of the dough by Turbo x 1 and add to the mix on the bag (if doing my hand remove dough from bowl and place onto oiled freezer bag)

3. Continue until you have done your 2 to 4 loaves
4. **Rest dough for 20 minutes** before you progress to the next step (this allows the flours to absorb more fully into the liquid)

### **STEP 3 – FEED STARTER TO GO BACK INTO THE FRIDGE - THIS CAN BE DONE WHILE YOUR DOUGH IS RESTING AFTER THE INITIAL KNEADING**

After activating your 300g starter with 80g rye flour and 120g filtered water (from Step 1) you ended up with 500g starter to use. You need to keep 150g to feed and return to the fridge for your next bake. So after making the loaves you want (up to 4), remove any starter in excess of 150g from your container before you feed it. This keeps your starter nice and lean.

To the 150g in your container **now add 90g filtered water first (if you add too much you can pour some off) and 60g rye flour and stir vigorously** to add oxygen to your starter. You will now have 300g starter again to keep as your permanent starter.

Place the lid on the container and use a non-permanent marker pen to note the date on the lid (this will help you keep track of when you last fed/used it).

It can now be stored in your fridge until you are ready to use it again. It will be fine for at least a week, although I have left it for up to a month and it has been fine. However, keep in mind that if you do this regularly it will eventually affect the strength of your starter as it doesn't like long periods of inactivity. So even if you don't intend to bake I would recommend you feed it at least every two weeks as though you are going to bake, remove some starter leaving 150g in the container, then feed it to go back into the fridge until you are ready to bake again.

### **STEP 4 – FINAL KNEAD**

1. Starting with the first dough you mixed put each dough back into TM bowl one at a time and **knead for 1 minute** (or if doing this by hand, knead for 3 to 4 minutes and follow the same process following)
2. Whilst the dough is kneading, spray the plastic bag with a little more oil
3. After kneading turn TM bowl upside down over the plastic bag and allow the dough to drop onto it – dough will be sticky so you will need to use a firm spatula to remove it all from the bowl
4. Encase the dough in the bag, ensuring you spray a little more oil into the bag where the dough will come in contact with it, then continue with the next dough
5. Put bags of dough into a container and place into fridge until tomorrow or the day after.

**NB: You can do the whole process in a day if you like but if doing so rest your dough for 2 to 3 hours now before moving onto Step 5 – Stretch and Fold**