



*Old World
Sourdough*

*Sourdough 101
Guide to Success*

Sourdough Starter 101 - Acquiring, Feeding, Using, Maintaining and Troubleshooting your Starter!



First and foremost, what is sourdough? When you mix water and flour together, the mixture will begin to ferment and absorb naturally occurring wild yeasts and bacteria from the environment. The yeast and bacteria feed on the new flour and water when you discard and feed your starter, which then releases gases. This release of gases is what makes your starter rise and fall.

Where does the flavor come from? The long fermentation time unlocks the nutrients in the flour and creates a more flavorful, digestible bread. This assists with gluten intolerance. However, while it assists with gluten intolerance unless you are using a gluten free starter there is gluten in a starter.

Acquiring Sourdough Starter

Once you have your starter, it is now your responsibility to keep it alive, happy and healthy. This is why we name our Starter. In theory, they become your child! After caring for it, you will develop a deep bond with this little guy or gal, so go ahead and name it. They will be yours to care for for years to come! Mine are named Thelma and Louise. And yes, they are that old!



Meet Louise!!

Ways to get your Starter going:

Adopt a Starter! The best way to get started!! Keep the tradition of friends or family members starter alive and thriving!!

Buy a Starter: There are many places online where you can buy sourdough starter. Check out our [Old World Sourdough Etsy shop](#) to purchase your sourdough starter. We only use high use quality ingredients and have both fresh and dehydrated options!

Make your Starter from Scratch: This option is somewhat daunting for most people, but if you are the DIY kind of person you can do this!! It will take about 14 days to get a starter you can bake with, and longer to develop that zesty sourdough flavor, but it only takes a few minutes per day to get it started. Temperature plays a critical role in the process. Ideally your kitchen should be between 70-80 degrees. If your kitchen doesn't maintain those temps storing it in your microwave or oven with a light on, or next to a sunny window is an option.

Make your Starter from Scratch Steps:

Day 1 - Place your glass jar for your starter to grow in on a scale and record that weight in grams. I always use grams because they are the easiest to calculate! Zero your scale out. Then put 100 grams of organic stone ground dark rye or whole wheat flour. These are the best options to get your starter going. You can switch to an all-purpose flour once your starter is active. It is key that you select a starter that has high protein content. The rye and whole wheat also contain more natural enzymes to feed the bacteria and yeast in your starter. Add 100 grams of filtered room temperature water to your flour. Mix well with a spatula, cover with a loose-fitting top, and let it sit for 24 hours at room temperature. I do not recommend a cloth top. My preference is wax paper loosely fitted with a rubber band or a Weck Jar not clamped tight.

Day 2 - You may or may not see bubbles which indicates fermentation. At this point, you want to do your first feeding. Remove and discard half of what is in the jar and do the same thing as yesterday, adding 100 grams of flour and 100 grams of filtered room temperature water. Mix, cover loosely, and let it sit for another 24 hours.

Days 3-14 - Hopefully you are starting to see bubbles along with some rising and falling of the starter on day 3! If not, no worries, just keep going. Repeat the process outlined in Day 2 - removing and discarding half and then feeding it equal parts flour and water. By day 7, you should definitely see bubbles and activity and it should be puffy and stretchy with the consistency of thick pancake batter. It should also be rising/doubling in size each time you feed it.

It is recommended to wait until day 14 to bake. But some people just can't wait. If after 7 days, you are getting it to double for 3 consecutive days go ahead and give it the float test. Drop about 1 tsp of your starter into water. If it floats, then it is ready to use. If it sinks, then your starter may need more time. This isn't a fool-proof indicator but can be a good basic indicator of whether your starter is ready to be used or not. You may not get the lift you desire quite yet, but who can really wait 14 days!!

After 14 days you may want to wean your starter off of whole wheat and/or rye. Start with a 50/50 blend of whole wheat/rye and all purpose (such as 50g of whole wheat/rye and 50g of all-purpose flour) and then eventually just an all-purpose or bread flour to keep it simple. Watch the protein level of your all-purpose or bread flour. A good rule of thumb is to be at 4 grams of protein per 30 gram serving. This helps maintain the integrity of your starter. You may also want to continue using a mixture of whole grain and all-purpose to add a deeper flavor to your starter. I keep

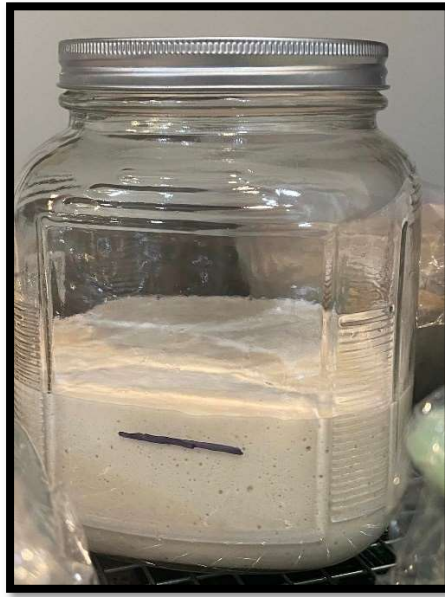
one that I feed 25/75 Organic Whole Grain & Organic Bread Flour and another that I feed only Organic Bread Flour.

Feeding Your Starter

Feeding your starter consistently is important. Ideally, you would feed it every 24 hours if you will be baking daily. Or weekly if you are a weekend baker.



7 AM Morning Feed



8 AM – 1 Hour after Feeding



9:30 – 2-1/2 Hours after Feeding

General guidelines for feeding:

- A scale is critical when feeding. Depending on how hydrated you would like your starter to be you can use any number of feeding ratios. My preference has always been the 1:1:1 ratio for a 100% hydration starter. Others swear by a 1:2:2 ratio. You can experiment and find what works best for you. There is no danger in switching if you start with one and find it isn't working. The key is to weigh and measure so you have the right ratio of flour to water.
- Remove part of your starter, about a third to half of the starter. I store the discard in the refrigerator in a large glass jar if I am not using it right away. It keeps for a couple weeks refrigerated. Then feed based on the ratio you are using. I keep approx. 50 grams of starter and add 50 grams of flour and 50 grams of water. At a minimum you should use at least 25% of the starter from your jar to keep it sustained.
- Again, I want to stress, watch the protein level of your flour. An organic, unbleached, all-purpose flour works best unless you want to add a little wheat or rye for flavor depth.

- A healthy starter will rise and fall (doubling in size) each time it is fed. I place a rubber band around my jar or put a line with a marker that helps me track this. A larger feed can take a little longer to double.
- **Feeding Timing**
 - The best time to feed your starter is after it falls.
 - The best time to use your starter is at its peak.
- **Daily Feeding:** If you maintain your starter at room temperature around 70-75°F and want it to be ready for baking within a day or two, daily feedings are recommended. Discard a portion of the starter and feed it with fresh flour and water every 24 hours.
- **Twice-Daily Feeding:** In warmer environments or if you prefer a faster fermentation process, you can feed your starter twice a day, approximately every 12 hours. This helps maintain a more active and vigorous starter.
- **Refrigerator Storage:** If you don't plan to bake frequently or want to slow down the fermentation process, you can store your starter in the refrigerator. When refrigerated, the feeding frequency can be reduced to once a week or even every two weeks. Remember to feed the starter and allow it to ferment at room temperature for a few hours before returning it to the refrigerator.

The key is to observe your starter's behavior and adjust the feeding frequency accordingly.

If it starts to develop a strong sour smell, becomes overly bubbly, or shows signs of slowing down (e.g., taking longer to rise after feeding), it may be an indication that your starter needs more frequent feedings.

Using Your Starter



On the morning of the day that you are going to make your dough, feed it at least 40-50% of its weight. If your house is colder (under 70 degrees) or your starter is a little slower at rising and falling, then you might want to experiment with feeding it the night before. As noted above, the best time to use your starter is when it has risen to its peak. Since everyone's starter and environment is different, you need to figure out when that is for your starter.

- If you are unsure whether your starter is ready to be used or not, try the float test above.
- Every time you use/take from your starter for baking, feed it using the guidelines above.
- You can feed as frequently as every 12 hours if you need more starter.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I have to feed my starter?

To keep it alive, healthy and bubbly! The yeast and healthy bacteria need food, otherwise they will begin to die off.

How do I know if my starter is ready to use?

The ideal time to use your starter is when it has risen double its size after feeding it. You can also use the float test. Drop about 1 tsp of your starter into water. If it floats, then it is ready to use. If it sinks, then your starter may need more time to rise or it should be fed again. This isn't a fool-proof indicator but can be a good basic indicator of whether your starter is ready to be used or not.

What is Sourdough Discard and do I have to throw it away?

Each time you feed your starter; you will want to discard a portion of it. This not only gets rid of the less active/dead starter at the top called the hooch (a byproduct of the fermentation process), but if you didn't discard, then your starter would eventually explode out of your container. You don't have to throw your sourdough discard away! Keep it refrigerated and use it in Sourdough Discard Recipes.

What is the best flour to feed my Starter?

When feeding your sourdough starter, it is generally recommended to use high-quality, unbleached organic flour. The type of flour you choose can impact the flavor, activity, and overall health of your starter. Here are some common flour options for feeding your sourdough starter:

1. **All-Purpose Flour:** All-purpose flour, which is a blend of hard and soft wheat, is a popular choice for feeding sourdough starter. It provides a good balance of protein and starch, which promotes a healthy fermentation process.
2. **Bread Flour:** Bread flour has a higher protein content compared to all-purpose flour. This can contribute to increased gluten development and give your sourdough starter extra strength and structure.
3. **Whole Wheat Flour:** Whole wheat flour adds nutritional value to your starter as it contains the bran and germ of the wheat kernel. It can provide a slightly nuttier flavor and enhance the complexity of your sourdough bread.
4. **Rye Flour:** Rye flour can be used in combination with other flours or as a standalone option for feeding your sourdough starter. Rye flour contains enzymes that can help boost fermentation activity and contribute to a distinct flavor profile.

5. **Spelt Flour:** Spelt flour is an ancient grain that can be used to feed your sourdough starter. It has a nutty flavor and can add a unique character to your bread.

It's worth noting that different types of flours may result in variations in flavor, fermentation speed, and texture.

You can experiment with different flour combinations and ratios to find the ones that produce the desired results for your baking preferences.

Additionally, using organic or locally sourced flours can add further depth to the flavor of your sourdough starter and bread.

I want more “sour” sourdough bread. How can I accomplish this?

- When you see the hooch develop at the top of your starter (a thin film that is the byproduct of fermentation), stir it back in rather than discarding it.
- Feed your starter less frequently, keeping it in the refrigerator between feeds.

I bake infrequently. Can I still bake with Sourdough Starter? And what if I travel and can't take my starter with me for regular feedings?

- If you only bake weekly, keep your starter in the refrigerator. Remove it the evening before baking to bring to room temperature and feed early in the morning with the normal feed/discard cycle. It may take a bit longer to double but should be ready to bake with it within a few hours.
- If you bake less frequently, store your starter in the refrigerator. Feed it once a week. The colder temperature will slow down the bacteria and fermentation. To do this, feed your starter, let it sit at room temperature for an hour or so, then cover with an airtight lid and place in the fridge. If it will be longer than a week between feedings you may need to do the normal feed/discard cycle at least 2-4 times before you bake with it again to wake it back up.

I want to dry out my starter for long term storage or to send it to a friend. How do I do that?

- To do this, take some of your starter when it's at its peak and spread it into a thin, even layer on a sheet of parchment paper. Allow this to dry completely! This can take a couple days if you don't have a dehydrator. Break it into small pieces or grind it into powder. Store in an airtight container or bag.
- To rehydrate it, weigh out an amount of starter and crush it into small bits. Put it into a jar and add the same weight of filtered room temperature water and flour. Allow it to rise and fall once, then proceed to feed it as normal. Depending on the strength of the dried starter, this can take just one day, or a couple days/feedings.
- It is always a good idea to dehydrate some for yourself as a backup in case anything happens to your living starter!

Troubleshooting Guide:

Troubleshooting problems with a sourdough starter can help identify and address issues that may affect its health and performance. Here are some common problems you may encounter with your sourdough starter and suggestions on how to troubleshoot them:

SLOW FERMENTATION OR LACK OF ACTIVITY

- **Check the temperature:** Ensure that your sourdough starter is kept in an environment with a consistent temperature between 70-75°F for optimal fermentation.
- **Adjust feeding schedule:** Consider increasing the frequency of feedings to provide more food for the microorganisms, or try using a higher hydration ratio to boost activity.

FOUL OR OFF ODOR

- **Evaluate your feeding routine:** Check if you're feeding your sourdough starter often enough. A strong, unpleasant smell can indicate that the starter needs more frequent feedings.
- **Discard and rebuild:** If the off odor persists, you may consider starting over as it may be contaminated.

HOOCH (LIQUID) SEPARATION

- **Adjust feeding frequency:** Hooch (a brownish liquid) that forms on top of your starter between feedings, indicates that the starter is hungry.
- **Stir or pour off excess hooch:** If hooch forms, stir it back into the starter or pour it off before feeding.
- **Reduce hydration:** If your starter consistently produces excessive hooch, try lowering the hydration level by using a lower water-to-flour ratio during feedings.

MOLD GROWTH

- **Maintain cleanliness:** Ensure that all equipment used for your starter is clean and free from any contaminants.
- **Avoid cross-contamination:** Store your starter away from other ferments or food sources that could introduce unwanted molds or bacteria.
- **Discard and start fresh:** If mold growth occurs, it's best to discard the affected starter and begin a new batch using a thoroughly cleaned container and fresh ingredients.

Remember, sourdough starters can be resilient and may require some experimentation and adjustments to find the best practices for your specific environment and routine.

Observing your starter's behavior, making small modifications, and maintaining a consistent feeding schedule will help troubleshoot and maintain a healthy and active **sourdough starter**.

Baking Conversion Chart

Want to make a **sourdough recipe** but don't have a kitchen scale on hand? No problem. Here is a handy dandy, baking conversion chart to make baking sourdough without a scale easy!

Use the **scoop and level technique** to measure your flour if you do not have a kitchen scale. As flour sits in a bag or canister it becomes more compact. You will need to fluff it up before measuring so that you don't end up with too much flour in your dough.

- Use a spoon to stir the flour while it is in its container.
- Scoop the flour into a measuring cup until it is heaped on top.
- Use a butterknife to level off the top.
-

This should give you the most accurate measurement of flour.

ACTIVE SOURDOUGH STARTER

- 50 g = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- 65 g = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup
- 100 g = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- 150 g = $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

SOURDOUGH DISCARD (UNFED)

- 10 g = 2 teaspoons
- 15 g = 1 tablespoon
- 62 g = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- 100 g = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup
- 125 g = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- 200 g = $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

FLOUR (AP, Bread and Whole Wheat)

- 40 g = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup
- 50 g = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup + 1 tablespoon
- 60 g = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
- 90 g = $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
- 100 g = $\frac{3}{4}$ cups + 1 tablespoon
- 125 g = 1 cup + 1 teaspoon
- 200 g = 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups
- 250 g = 2 cups + 2 teaspoons
- 300 g = 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
- 360 g = 3 cups
- 375 g = 3 cups + 2 tablespoons
- 400 g = 3 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups
- 440 g = 3 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups
- 450 g = 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups
- 480 g = 4 cups
- 500 g = 4 cups + 2 tablespoons

WATER/MILK

- 15 g = 1 tablespoon
- 250 g = 1 cup + 2 teaspoons
- 270 g = 1 cup + 2 tablespoons
- 300 g = 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups
- 325 g = 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups + 1 teaspoon
- 350 g = 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups + 2 tablespoons
- 360 g = 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
- 365 g = 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups + 1teaspoon
- 375 g = 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups + 1 tablespoon
- 390 g = 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups + 2 tablespoons
- 400 g = 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups
- 420 g = 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups

SOURDOUGH GLOSSARY

A

- **Activation** in sourdough refers to the process of revitalizing and energizing a dormant **sourdough starter** by feeding it with fresh flour and water. This encourages the growth and activity of wild yeasts and bacteria, making the starter ready for baking by enhancing its leavening power and flavor development potential.
- An **active sourdough starter** refers to a live culture of wild yeasts and lactobacilli that have been regularly fed and maintained. It is characterized by its ability to ferment and leaven bread dough effectively, exhibiting robust activity and a distinctly sour aroma, indicating a healthy microbial community ready for baking delicious sourdough bread.
- **Autolyse** is a technique in **sourdough bread** making that involves combining flour and water and allowing them to rest before the addition of other ingredients such as yeast or salt. During this resting period, gluten formation begins, and enzymes naturally present in the flour break down starches, resulting in improved dough hydration, gluten development, and overall bread texture.

B

- A **baguette** is a classic French bread known for its long, slender shape and crisp crust. It is typically made from a simple dough with a high hydration level, resulting in a light and airy interior with a distinct chewiness.
- **Baker's percentage**, also known as baker's math or baker's formula, is a way of expressing the ingredient proportions in a bread recipe based on the weight of flour used as the reference point. It is commonly used in professional baking to ensure consistent results and easy scaling of recipes. In the baker's percentage, the weight of the flour is always considered 100%, and all other ingredient weights are expressed as a percentage of the flour weight.

- A **banneton**, also known as a proofing basket, is a specialized basket used in bread baking to support the dough during its final rise. Made from natural materials such as cane or rattan, its spiral or ridged pattern provides the dough with structure while allowing air circulation to create a desired shape and texture.
- A **batard** is a type of bread commonly found in French baking, characterized by its elongated, oval shape.
- **Bench rest**, in the sourdough process, refers to a period of time during which the dough is allowed to rest after the initial mixing and before shaping. This rest allows the gluten in the dough to relax and develop, making it easier to shape and resulting in a better structure and texture in the final loaf.
- A **bench scraper** is a versatile tool used by bakers for various tasks. It typically consists of a rectangular metal blade with a handle and is used to divide, lift, and shape the dough during the bread-making process. It is particularly handy for scraping dough off the work surface, dividing the dough into portions, and assisting in shaping and transferring the dough to baking vessels.
- A **boule** refers to a round or ball-shaped loaf of bread. It is typically characterized by its domed top and rustic appearance, achieved through a combination of proper shaping techniques and final proofing in a round container.
- **Bulk ferment**, in the sourdough process, refers to the initial stage of fermentation where the entire batch of mixed dough is allowed to rise in a bulk form. During this period, the yeast and bacteria in the sourdough starter metabolize the sugars in the dough, producing carbon dioxide gas, which helps to develop flavor, structure, and texture in the final loaf.

C

- **Cold retarding**, in the sourdough process, involves placing the shaped dough in a cold environment, typically in a refrigerator, to undergo a prolonged fermentation at lower temperatures. This technique allows for a slower fermentation process, which results in enhanced flavor development, improved texture, and increased convenience for bakers as it allows for extended fermentation times and flexibility in baking schedules.

- A **couche**, in the baking context, refers to a fabric or linen cloth used to support and shape proofing bread dough. It is typically made of natural, unbleached material and is used to separate and provide structure to individual portions of dough, preventing them from spreading and sticking together during the final rise.
- The **crumb** refers to the internal texture and structure of a baked loaf of bread. It is characterized by the distribution of air pockets or cells within the bread, resulting from the fermentation and expansion of carbon dioxide produced by yeast and bacteria during the proofing and baking stages.

D

- A **Danish whisk** is a specialized tool used for mixing and incorporating ingredients when preparing sourdough or other doughs. It features a unique design with a long handle and a series of sturdy wire loops, which efficiently blend the ingredients together, helping to develop gluten and ensure thorough mixing without overworking the dough.
- **Discard** refers to a portion of the **sourdough starter** that is removed and not used in a recipe. It is typically done during feeding or refreshing the starter to maintain its balance and prevent excessive growth. Discarding a portion helps control the overall quantity of starter and allows for regular **feeding and maintenance**.
- **Dough** refers to the mixture of flour, water, salt and sourdough starter that undergoes fermentation and proofing to create bread. It is during this stage that the yeast and bacteria in the sourdough starter interact with the dough, producing carbon dioxide gas and developing gluten, resulting in the characteristic texture and flavor of **sourdough bread**.
- A **Dutch oven** is a heavy, lidded pot typically made of cast iron or ceramic that is used for baking bread or cooking. It provides a closed and steam-filled environment during baking, which helps create a desirable crust, oven spring, and moisture retention in the bread, resulting in a professional-quality artisan loaf.

E

- An **ear** refers to the characteristic crust feature found on certain bread loaves. It is an elongated or pointed protrusion that forms along the score lines on the surface of the bread during baking, resulting from the expansion and splitting of the dough under high heat, creating a visually appealing and textured crust.
- **Elasticity** refers to the ability of the dough to stretch and recover its shape after being manipulated or stretched. It is a desirable quality that indicates the presence of developed gluten, allowing the dough to hold its structure and retain gas produced during fermentation, resulting in a lighter and more airy texture in the final bread.
- **Enriched dough** refers to a type of dough that contains added ingredients to enhance its flavor, texture, and nutritional value. These ingredients commonly include fats such as butter or oil, sugar, eggs, milk, or other enriching elements, resulting in a softer, richer, and more tender final product, such as biscuits or rolls.
- The **extraction rate** for flour refers to the percentage of the whole grain that remains in the flour after the milling process. It is a measure of how much of the bran, germ, and endosperm are included in the final product, with a higher extraction rate indicating a greater proportion of the whole grain and a potentially higher nutrient content in the flour.

F

- **Feeding** refers to the act of refreshing or replenishing the sourdough starter with fresh flour and water to maintain its vitality and activity. This regular **feeding** provides the yeast and bacteria in the starter with fresh nutrients, allowing them to multiply and continue the fermentation process necessary for leavening bread.
- The **final shape** refers to the specific form given to the dough just before it goes into the oven for baking. This shaping step involves carefully manipulating and molding the dough to achieve the desired loaf shape, ensuring proper tension, and creating surface tension to support optimal rise and structure during the baking process.

- The **float test** is a method used to determine the readiness of a sourdough starter or dough for baking. It involves placing a small piece of the starter or dough into a bowl of water, and if it floats, it indicates that the fermentation is sufficiently active, with enough carbon dioxide produced by the yeast, indicating that the starter or dough is ready to be used.
- **Flour** is a finely ground powder made from grains, legumes, or tubers, commonly wheat, that is used as a primary ingredient in baking and cooking. It provides structure, texture, and bulk to various recipes, acting as a binding agent and a source of carbohydrates and protein.

G

- **Gluten** is a protein found in wheat and related grains, such as barley and rye. When flour is mixed with water, gluten forms a network of elastic strands that give the dough its stretchiness and allow it to trap and hold carbon dioxide produced during fermentation, contributing to the structure and texture of baked goods.
- **Green flour** refers to flour that has recently been milled.

H

- **Hard red wheat** is a variety of wheat known for its robust flavor, high protein content, and reddish bran color. It is commonly used for making bread due to its excellent gluten-forming properties, which contribute to good dough elasticity and structure in baked goods.
- **High extraction flour** refers to a type of flour that is milled to retain a significant portion of the bran and germ components of the wheat grain, resulting in flour with higher nutrient content. It typically has a coarser texture and a more pronounced flavor compared to refined flours, making it popular among bakers seeking to incorporate more of the whole grain into their products.

- **Hooch** refers to the liquid layer that forms on top of a neglected or hungry sourdough starter. It is a byproduct of the fermentation process, consisting primarily of alcohol, indicating that the starter has not been fed and is in need of refreshing.
- **Hydration** refers to the ratio of water to flour in a dough or sourdough starter. It is expressed as a percentage and determines the overall moisture content of the dough, affecting its texture, elasticity, and handling characteristics. Higher hydration results in a wetter and more extensible dough, while lower hydration yields a drier and stiffer dough.

K

- **Kneading** is the process of working and manipulating the dough by hand or with a stand mixer to develop gluten and create a smooth, elastic texture. It involves a rhythmic folding, pressing, and stretching motion that helps distribute yeast and fermentation byproducts, ensuring proper fermentation and the desired structure and texture in the final bread.
- **Knocking back** refers to the technique of deflating the dough after its initial rise or fermentation. It involves gently pressing down or punching the dough to release excess gas, redistribute yeast and bacteria, and create a more even texture before shaping and proceeding with further fermentation or proofing.

L

- **Lactic acid** is a byproduct of the fermentation process carried out by lactic acid bacteria present in the sourdough starter. It contributes to the distinct tangy flavor of sourdough bread and helps regulate the pH levels in the dough, creating an environment that promotes the growth of beneficial microorganisms while inhibiting the growth of harmful ones.
- A **lame** is a small, handheld tool used for scoring or slashing the surface of bread dough just before baking. It typically consists of a handle and a sharp blade or razor, allowing bakers to create precise cuts that help control the expansion of the dough during baking, promote proper oven spring, and give the bread an attractive appearance.

- **Lean dough** refers to bread dough made with minimal additional ingredients beyond the basic components of flour, water, salt, and sourdough starter. It is often used to produce rustic loaves of bread with a simpler flavor profile, showcasing the natural fermentation and characteristics of the sourdough culture.
- **Levain** refers to the portion of the sourdough starter that is used to leaven or raise bread dough. It is a mixture of flour and water that has undergone fermentation, capturing wild yeast and lactobacilli cultures, which provide leavening power and contribute to the unique flavor and texture of sourdough bread.
- **Low extraction** flour refers to flour that has been milled to remove a significant portion of the bran and germ components of the grain, resulting in a lighter-colored and more refined flour. It typically has a lower fiber and nutrient content compared to whole grain or high extraction flour and is often used in recipes where a lighter texture and milder flavor are desired.

M

- The **mother**, in the sourdough process, refers to the original batch of active and mature **sourdough starter** that serves as the foundation for future batches. It is a well-established culture of wild yeast and lactobacilli that imparts flavor and leavening properties to the sourdough, and it is regularly fed and maintained to keep it healthy and active.

N

- **Naturally leavened** refers to the method of bread-making that relies solely on wild yeast and lactobacilli present in a sourdough starter for fermentation and leavening, without the use of commercial yeast. This process allows for a slower and more complex fermentation, contributing to the distinct flavor, texture, and rise of naturally leavened sourdough bread.

O

- **Oven spring** refers to the rapid rise and expansion of the dough that occurs during the early stages of baking in a hot oven. It is a result of the trapped carbon dioxide gas expanding due to increased heat, creating a burst of upward movement and giving the bread an open and airy crumb structure.

P

- The **poke test** is a method used to determine the readiness of a dough for baking. It involves gently pressing a finger into the dough, and if the indentation slowly springs back, it indicates proper fermentation and readiness, while a quick recovery suggests more time is needed. If the indentation remains, it suggests has over proofed.
- **Pre-shaping** refers to the step after bulk fermentation and before the final shaping of the dough. It involves loosely shaping the dough into a ball in preparation for the final shaping, which helps maintain the desired structure and achieve a well-rounded loaf.
- **Proofing** refers to the final stage of fermentation after shaping the dough. It is a period of rest and rising, allowing the dough to undergo its final fermentation, develop flavor, and increase in volume before being baked, resulting in a light and airy texture in the finished sourdough bread.

S

- **Scoring** refers to the act of making deliberate cuts or slashes on the surface of the shaped dough just before baking. These cuts serve multiple purposes, including controlling the expansion of the dough during baking, creating an aesthetically pleasing pattern, and allowing steam to escape, promoting an even rise and a desirable crust formation in the finished bread.
- **Shaping** refers to the process of giving the dough its final form and structure before it undergoes its final rise and baking. It involves carefully manipulating and stretching the dough to create tension and to shape it into desired shapes, such as boules, batards, or

baguettes, ensuring proper rise and creating an appealing appearance in the finished bread.

- A **sourdough starter** is a mixture of flour and water that has been fermented by wild yeast and lactobacilli cultures. It serves as a natural leavening agent, providing the necessary microorganisms for the fermentation process and imparting the characteristic tangy flavor and unique texture to sourdough bread.
- **Stretch and fold** is a technique used to strengthen the gluten structure in the dough during bulk fermentation. It involves gently stretching the dough, folding it onto itself, and repeating the process multiple times at regular intervals, improving dough strength, redistributing yeast, and fermentation byproducts, and enhancing the overall structure and texture of the final bread.

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