

Eleni's Sourdough Bread

Makes 1 loafs | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 4 hours

Swick

Chef's Notes

*Baking with a sourdough starter (or wild yeast, a mixture of flour and water that's fermented) captures beneficial lactic acid bacteria and results in a healthier, tastier bread than if you were to use premade yeasts. The easiest way to make sourdough is to ask another baker for some starter. If that's not possible, make your own:

In a large glass jar with a lot of room, mix together 2 cups whole-wheat flour and 2 cups water until it forms a thick liquid. Cover with cheesecloth or a paper towel and secure; keep on your kitchen counter away from direct sunlight. After 2 days, the starter will begin to rise and air bubbles will appear.

Scoop out three-quarters of the starter mixture and throw away. Add 1/2 cup whole-wheat flour and 1/2 cup water to the remaining mixture. Mix well. Cover again and set for 24 hours. Some foam will develop at the top when the starter is active and ready. Store it in the refrigerator.

You should feed your culture once a week if it's refrigerated by adding 1/2 cup flour and 1/2 cup water. Mix and let sit for an hour or two at room temperature before refrigerating again.

**This amount of water equates to 80%.

This amount of salt equates to 1%. This is relatively low salt compared to most bread, which often contains 2% salt. Additional salt brings out more flavor. Give it a try at 1% and see how you like it. Next time, increase the salt if you prefer.

Step 1: Making the Bread

- 2 cups (400 g) sourdough starter,* store-bought or homemade
 - 3 cups (680 g)** room temperature water
 - 3 1/3 cups (1 lb/450 g) whole wheat flour
 - 2 3/4 cups (1 lb/450 g) semolina flour
 - Pinch (11 g) of salt***
 - Pinch (7.5 g) ground pepper (optional)
 - Sesame seeds (optional)
- In a very large bowl, mix starter and water together.
- In another bowl, combine flours with salt and pepper.
- Add the flour mixture, 1 cup at a time, to the water mixture, and stir thoroughly with each addition. Use your hands and continue to add flour until well combined.
- Knead the dough for at least 20 minutes.
- Plop dough into a low, round 20-inch pan and cover with olive oil; top with sesame seeds, if using.
- Cut a small cross in the middle of the dough; then cover with a towel and let rise for 2 hours.

Bake in the oven for 15 minutes at 480°F (250°C), then 15 minutes at 390°F (200°C), and another 15 minutes at 350°F (180°C).

Check the internal temperature of the loaf with a thermometer; it should read at least 180°F (82°C). If the temperature has not reached this point, return the bread to the oven.

This makes for a perfect loaf inside and out.