

A Simple Sourdough Boule

Blog post: <https://korenainthekitchen.com/2020/06/16/current-events-sourdough-bread/>

Recipe adapted slightly from [My Daily Sourdough Bread](#). Makes 1 round boule.

The night before:

In a medium lidded container (I use a pint jar), mix together:

75 g unbleached AP flour
75 g water
1 tablespoon of ripe mother sourdough starter

Put the lid loosely on the jar and let it ferment overnight (about 8 hours) at room temperature.

At the same time, combine together in a large bowl:

400 g unbleached organic all purpose flour (I sometimes replace up to 100 g with whole grain flour such as whole wheat or rye)
280 g water

Mix together until evenly moistened, then cover the bowl with a lid or plastic wrap and let autolyse overnight.

The next morning:

Your starter should have doubled (at least) in volume.

The mixture of flour and water should have relaxed overnight and become a very stretchy dough.

Mix the fermented starter into the autolysed flour and water mixture. I do this by squishing and squeezing the dough with my hands until it is evenly mixed and cohesive.

Let the dough rest 1 hour at room temperature to begin fermentation.

After 1 hour, mix in **8 g fine sea salt** and if needed, an additional **10 g water** with the same squishing and squeezing technique. I usually don't need to add the extra water, but this is something you'll learn to get a feel for depending on the flour you use, humidity, etc.

Bulk ferment:

Let the dough sit at (warm) room temperature for 3-5 hours for the bulk ferment. The exact length of the bulk ferment will depend on the ambient temperature. In the summer, my kitchen is the perfect temperature for this, but in the cooler months, I will use the "proofing bread" feature on my oven, or put the dough in a turned-off oven with just the light on to give it just a touch of warmth to keep fermentation moving.

During the bulk fermentation, stretch and fold the dough every 45-60 minutes (3-5 times total) to help build dough structure. To do this, slide your hand under the edge of the dough and pull up, then fold over on itself. Repeat 5-6 more times until all the edges of the dough have been stretched and folded in.

At the end of the bulk fermentation the dough should feel puffed and airy (increased in volume by about 30-40%), strong and greasy to the touch, and should have nice pleasant sweet smell. You should see some fermentation bubbles on the surface of the dough. (Undeveloped dough in the bulk fermentation could be one of the reasons for underproofed bread.)

Pre-shape/shape/final rise:

Turn the fermented dough out onto floured surface, using a flexible plastic dough scraper to help get the dough gently out of the bowl without deflating it. Lightly dust the dough with flour and with the help of your dough scraper, turn it over, flour-side down. To pre-shape for a boule, bring the edges into the centre and pinch them together to form a round. Use your dough scraper to flip it over seam-side down. Cover the dough with the upside-down bowl and let rest for 10-15 minutes (aka, the "bench rest"). After the bench rest, properly fermented dough should have bubbles on the surface.

Prepare your proofing vessel. I use a small colander (about 8" across and 4" deep) for this, but you can use a real proofing basket if you have one ;) Generously dust a linen/cotton cloth (something with a tight, smooth weave - NOT Terry cloth) with a mix of brown rice flour and all purpose flour and drape it over the colander/proofing vessel.

With your bench scraper, flip the rested dough over (seam-side up) and shape it gently but firmly into its final shape to create surface tension. For a boule, you again want to pull and pinch the edges of the dough in toward the centre. To tighten up the boule shape, place the pinched dough seam-side down on an unfloured surface and with your hands on either side of the dough, twist it several times to draw the dough together and create some surface tension on the outside of the dough. Place the shaped dough seam-side up on the floured cloth in the rising vessel. Dust with flour, fold over the ends of the cloth, and seal inside a large plastic bag.

Rise at room temperature until increased in volume by ~30% and it pushes back slowly when poked with a finger (3-4 hours, temperature depending). Chill in the fridge for 1 hour at the end of the rise to make it easier to score.

Baking:

At least 30 minutes before the dough is ready, put lidded Dutch oven on the middle rack of the oven and preheat to 450°F.

Turn the risen dough out onto a piece of parchment paper. Score the top with a lame (or a razor blade, or a sharp knife) – I prefer one deep score on one side of the boule to give the loaf room to expand, plus some shallower scoring as decoration. Transfer the dough and parchment paper to the preheated Dutch oven in the oven, put on the lid, and bake at 450°F for 20 minutes. Remove the lid, reduce the heat to 425°F and bake 20-25 minutes more, until deeply browned.

When baked, lift the bread out of the Dutch oven and cool completely on a rack before slicing.

I like to store the bread uncovered, cut side-down on a cutting board for the first day, then sealed in a large Ziplock bag from day 2 onward. Day old or older bread makes excellent toast, and really great croutons.