

SOURDOUGH & *MORE*

Much more than a Bread Cookbook

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Excerpt



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This cookbook is *much* more than the usual Sourdough Bread Cookbook. Within these pages you will find more than three-hundred sourdough recipes and menus for breakfast basics, soups, main dishes, savories, cookies & sweets, pastry & pies, cakes & desserts...as well as those wonderful old-fashioned bread recipes. You will also find many marvelous ways to use sourdough you might not have thought of before, a delightful collection of seven cookbooks rolled into one. This cookbook is also more than a list of recipes.

I became enthused about sourdough baking once again, when I came across my grandmother's and great-grandmother's hand-written sourdough recipes. I left the old menus intact as I found them, in the combinations of foods as my family ate them. Each generation added their notes, variations and improvements to these recipes. And in calculating the age of the collection, I realized many of the recipes had a basis in late seventeenth century cooking, perhaps even earlier. Everything was homemade, homegrown or grazing out in a field somewhere, and made from scratch. I have very fond memories of table wine and beer made at home, and our own smokehouse just off the kitchen, a far cry from today, when everything can be found in a supermarket or special ordered from a variety of purveyors.

I can still remember my Grandmother adding a piece of crustless bread soaked in warm fresh raw milk to her bread recipes if she fell short of having enough sourdough starter to do her daily baking. My mother did, too. These early bakers knew their sourdough, they knew their bread dough, they knew their ovens; these early cooks and bakers very definitely knew their environment. They also knew how to get from A to Z in baking, quite successfully, without being influenced by all the rhetoric touted these days by self-styled experts. These folks knew when they had to add more sourdough batter, more flour, and/or different flavorings by instinct. They also knew when to add more yeast, or subtract the yeast, when to punch down three times instead of two or one, all depending on their

sourdough culture, the humidity, and a host of other variables.

The success of a baking project as well as anything else is...did it work? If it works, it is correct. That's how recipes were first developed and were handed down through the centuries—by trial and error. To really be *authentic*, you would have to give up your store bought flours and cornmeal and grind your own with an *authentic* grindstone, after you grew and gathered the grain yourself. And most certainly, your modern oven and your refrigerator would not be *authentic*, as well as your electric mixer with its dough hook, or your bread maker. Do be realistic about that word *authentic*.

Now, having said all that, note the following recipes are preservative free, therefore, the baked product is best when eaten within a day or two. This is also why you will find most sourdough recipes are for small amounts, which *can* be consumed in a day or two by the average family of today. (A very scary thought is to know a commercially-made loaf of bread can stay fresh in the refrigerator for months at a time.)

I have also indicated where the recipes need salt. Again, this is always personal taste *and* preference. All the recipes included here are family recipes, in use for two centuries and more, and the main meal recipes are far from the norm of the usual accompaniments of peas, green beans and corn. As you read more of the sections, most soups, main dishes, savories, sides, pies, cakes and desserts can be mixed and matched in many, many different combinations.

Experiment. Create your own menus. Add and subtract from these recipes to your heart's content. I wish you the best as you form your own very special combinations and write your own family's traditional cookbook.

Good cooking and baking...

Elizabeth

To Begin...

To begin your Sourdough experience, start with a glass or crockery container which has a loose fitting lid, preferably one which has a $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ hole drilled into the lid. A small glass plate on top of a 3 to 4 quart pickle crock will work too. Absolutely, use **no metal** container to hold your sourdough culture.

Do not use plastic ever. Sourdough culture will etch into the plastic and pick up other odors, as well as possibly leave little bits of plastic in your batters. Plastic still isn't stable enough to use to hold a living, growing sourdough culture, no matter what the manufacturer says, or what you've read.

The rule for centuries has been to never use metal...ever, not even a metal spoon to stir your recipe once the sourdough has been added. I have experimented a little with this, and find I can use a stainless steel bowl and an electric mixer with stainless steel beaters. Any other metal will transfer a metal taste. With bread recipes, a stainless steel dough hook can be used. Experiment until you find what works for you.

Sourdough Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon of active dry yeast [can be wild, store-bought, special sourdough culture... whatever]
 - 2½ cups of warm spring or filtered water [tap water is full of chlorine, chemicals]
 - 2-3 tablespoons of sugar [I personally add 3, my grandmother 2]
 - 3 cups of high gluten bread flour [or unbleached all-purpose flour – you may need a gluten booster]
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Method

Combine all the ingredients in a crock or container of choice; stir the mixture well until all the flour is incorporated. Do not use tap water. Tap water is full of chlorine and can affect the starter and can also give an *off* taste to your culture, especially over time.

Cover your container and cock the lid about 1/8 to ¼ inch if the lid doesn't have a hole in it, so the starter can work and breathe and gather more yeast molecules from the air in your kitchen. Do *not* leave the lid off your starter, for it will form a thick, gooey crust that will have to be discarded and may spoil the starter.

Let the container set in a stable warm place away from cool drafts overnight to begin to proof when you first begin. (10 to 12 hours minimum, 3 or 4 days maximum should do it, depending on your kitchen) An oven is a perfect place to get your sourdough to working properly, (cock the door open a bit), but it will work just as well sitting out on a kitchen counter away from drafts, including air-conditioner drafts. If you use an oven, be sure to put a note on your oven door to remind yourself the starter is in there doing its thing.

Once you start your sourdough culture, you may want to let your yeast get use to your kitchen environment with feeding and caring for it for a week or so, before attempting bread recipes. You can use it earlier for other things.

Take it out of the refrigerator once or twice a week, let it warm to room temperature, feed, and let it sit out a day or so, and *then* refrigerate again until ready to use. You may use the new culture sooner for pancakes, and other baked goods such as muffins, cornbread, and biscuits. If you know you will use the starter every third or fourth day, the mixture does not need to be refrigerated and your recipes will go much faster.

To feed your starter

8 to 10 hours before using your starter, take it out of the refrigerator, let it warm up to room temperature for at least eight hours in a warm place.

Add

- 1 cup of unbleached bread or unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1/2 to 2/3 cup of room temperature bottled or filtered water [more if you need to thin your starter]

This activates and replenishes the starter. Let the mixture set out in a warm place overnight or at least eight hours before using. The starter will give a much better product if it is puffy and active, especially if you are making bread. When I make sourdough noodles or dumplings, or use starter as a breading, or for pie dough, I don't necessarily use activated starter, if the starter is at room temperature and still has a few bubbles here and there. In these recipes, you are going for the sourdough taste, rather than maximum rising of the dough or batter.

When you are ready to use the starter, stir the starter, and then measure out the amount you will need for your recipe[s].

Remember, before beginning any sourdough baking project, bring your starter to room temperature, and activate and replenish your starter before each recipe. I put a little label on the lid of my starter with the feeding recipe so it is always at hand. A grayish and under-active starter will not give a light and yeasty finished product. If you are baking many items, or doubling your recipe, also double or triple your starter as needed, and allow for the extra expansion with a larger container. The idea is to keep at least two cups of starter on hand to feed and care for. Starter needs to be replenished at least once every seven to ten days to keep it active, if it is refrigerated, and if you bake infrequently.

Author's notes

1. If you bake only once a week to ten days, refrigerate the starter. It is essential to let the starter warm to room temperature before feeding. With the variety of sourdough uses and recipes in this cookbook, you may find yourself using your starter more and more, and the less need for refrigeration.
2. Read all recipes through to the end before beginning your baking or meal assembly project, so you have the tools and ingredients ready at hand.

3. Have all your ingredients at room temperature for all of the recipes, unless otherwise stated in a particular recipe. This is a given for any cooking project.
4. Bread crusts oftentimes split as the loaves rise and gases escape. The cause: too much flour added, creating an overly dry dough, or poor bread flour with weak gluten, or too quick rising. If the top of your unbaked loaf is docked [slashed], it will help the gasses to escape.
5. For bread baking, bread flour will give the best results because of its high gluten content. I use bread flour for all my baking needs and I buy in twenty-five pound bags or the best value. Compare bulk buying to a four or five pound bag of bread flour for five dollars+ at the supermarket. Fill your kitchen flour container and store the remaining flour in the freezer or in air-tight tins or containers. I use heavy duty plastic zipper bags to store flour in the freezer and allow the bag to come to room temperature before opening and using. If I don't have the freezer room, use air-tight tins or glass canisters with ground stoppers.

Using bread flour exclusively for everything, also cuts down the need for keeping and storing two or three kinds of flour in today's small kitchen pantries. If your baking results aren't doing so well, and you are using all-purpose flour for your bread, add one teaspoon of dry gluten to the recipe as a matter of habit, and stir it into the flour. Remember too, the flour amounts for bread baking are approximate, even though the recipes don't necessarily state this. If you need to add more flour to your bread, add 1-2 tablespoons at a time. As you develop your own baking techniques, you will be able to adjust the recipes in this book by instinct, to fit your own baking needs.

6. Here are a few bakers tricks for crust treatment of your sourdough bread. Placing a pan of water under the baking bread, or misting with a fine mist of water will give a crusty crust, like that of French Bread. Cornstarch and water also gives a chewy crust, as well as making the top of the loaf shiny. An egg glaze gives a loaf of bread a golden color, and helps herbs and seeds to stick to the crust. Melted butter, milk or cream brushed onto the top of a loaf before baking will give a soft crust.
7. I can't stress enough about oven times and temperatures. Every home I've ever lived in, the ovens were very different, and consequently, I was forever adjusting oven times and temperatures. The oven I am using today is a hot oven, and I live in the Sonoran Desert at an altitude of a little over 1200 feet. I have to reduce the temperature 25 degrees for everything and must occasionally give my recipes an extra 5-

10 minutes. Know your oven, know your elevation, and adjust accordingly.

8. I often use my sourdough starter alone, for breading fish, chicken, vegetables, etc. The batter works best if the liquid [liquor] is drained off before using, adhering much better to the food if it is thick. Whatever you are going to bread, needs to be blotted dry with a paper towel. The sourdough starter doesn't have to be active to use as a breading. Once you use sourdough starter as a breading batter, you will be persuaded to use it often. The breading is crunchy and light, and *stays* crunchy, even through an oven warm-up. Discard the remaining sourdough batter once raw food has been dipped into it.

Sourdough Breakfast Basics

Sourdough Breakfast Muffins

Ingredients

- 1½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
- ¼ teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup shredded Parmesan or Cheddar cheese
- 1 large egg [or 2 egg whites]
- ½ cup activated sourdough starter
- 2/3 cup milk [fresh or canned, whole, low fat or skim]
- 1/3 cup light olive oil [original recipe, bacon drippings]
- ¼ cup cooked, crumbled, lean bacon
- * 2 tablespoons minced onion [optional]

Method

In a large glass mixing bowl stir together the dry ingredients to combine. Stir in the cheese to coat with flour, set aside.

In a smaller glass mixing bowl beat the egg till frothy. Stir in the sourdough starter with a wooden spoon. Add the milk and oil [or room temperature bacon drippings].

Add the wet mixture to the dry and mix until the flour is moistened. Stir in the crumbled bacon and minced onion. Batter will be lumpy.

Spoon batter into 10-12 paper lined muffin cups, filling each cup 2/3 to ¾ full. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 20-25 minutes or until muffins are lightly browned and the tops are firm to the touch. Serve warm, plain, or with butter. Yields 10-12 muffins.

Sourdough Blueberry Muffins

Ingredients

- 1 large egg [or 2 egg whites]
 - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla
 - ¼ cup melted butter [or light olive oil]
 - 1 cup activated sourdough starter
 - 1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - ¼ cup granulated sugar
 - ½ cup fresh or canned blueberries
 - * granulated sugar for the tops
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Method

Place the egg, vanilla, butter, and starter in a medium glass mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon to combine.

Combine flour, soda, salt, sugar, and stir in the blueberries to coat with the flour mixture. Add the flour to the wet ingredients.

Stir batter with a wooden spoon until just mixed and flour is moistened. Batter will be lumpy. Spoon the batter into 6 paper-lined muffin cups. Sprinkle the tops of the muffins with a pinch of granulated sugar.

Bake in a preheated 425 degree oven for 15-18 minutes or until lightly browned, and tops are firm to the touch. Yield 6 muffins.

Note: Recipe can easily be doubled for one dozen muffins.

Old-Fashion *Sourdough* French Toast [1]

Ingredients

- 2 large eggs, beaten [or 1 large egg + 2 egg whites]
 - 1 cup half/half
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla
 - 8 slices dry, day old *Sourdough Bread* [**Breads**]
 - * Butter for frying [or buttery flavored cooking spray]
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Method

Lightly beat the eggs with a whisk. Add the half/half, salt, and vanilla and mix well. In a large skillet melt enough butter to coat the bottom of the skillet over medium high heat. Add the bread slices and fry until browned and crisp. Turn over the bread slices and fry to a crisp brown on the other side and insuring the sides of the bread are cooked.

Serve with maple or favorite syrup or a sprinkling of confectioner's sugar. Yields 4-8 servings.

Variation

Sourdough Cinnamon Raisin Bread is a delicious substitution for plain *Sourdough Bread* in this recipe. [**Breads**]

Very French *Sourdough* Toast [2]

Ingredients

- 6-8 slices white *Sourdough Bread* cut 1½ -2 inches thick **[Breads]**
 - 2 teaspoons orange zest
 - 2 cups heavy cream
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 2 cups half/half
 - 5 large eggs + 1 egg yolk, well beaten [or 3 large eggs + 6 egg whites]
 - 2/3 cup Grand Marnier or Kirsch
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Method

Slice the bread 1½ -2 inches thick. Slices should be a uniform size.

In a large mixing bowl add the above ingredients except the bread and beat well.

Generously butter a flat Pyrex® baking dish and arrange the thick slices of *Sourdough Bread* in the dish. Pour the egg mixture over the top. Cover with plastic wrap. Place in the refrigerator for 2-4 hours.

When ready to bake, remove plastic wrap and turn the bread once, let set for 15 minutes to let the dish come to room temperature, so the dish doesn't break when you put it into a hot oven.

Bake in a pre-heated 400 degree oven for 20 minutes or until the bread is browned on top. Serve warm with your favorite syrup or a dusting of confectioner's sugar. Yields 4-8 servings.

Variation

Thick sliced *Sourdough Cinnamon Raisin Bread* is a delicious substitution for plain *Sourdough Bread* in this recipe. **[Breads]**

Hearty *Sourdough* Bran Muffins

Ingredients

- ½ cup activated sourdough starter
 - ½ teaspoon baking soda
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup milk [whole, low fat, skim, canned/undiluted]
 - 1/3 cup light olive oil
 - 1 large egg [or two egg whites]
 - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla
 - 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
 - 2 tablespoon wheat bran
 - 2 tablespoons ground pecans [original recipe, walnuts]
 - ¼ cup granulated sugar
 - 1 tablespoon double acting baking powder
 - * extra granulated sugar for the tops of the muffins
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Method

In a large glass mixing bowl combine the sourdough starter, the milk and the baking soda and stir with a wooden spoon. Add the olive oil, egg, and vanilla.

Combine together the dry ingredients and add to the wet. Stir gently with a wooden spoon to just incorporate. Batter will be slightly lumpy.

Spoon batter evenly into paper-lined muffin tins. Sprinkle the tops of the muffins with a pinch of granulated sugar.

Bake in a preheated 400 degree oven for 20-25 minutes or until the muffins are lightly browned and the tops are firm to the touch. Serve warm with butter and jam or plain. Yields 10-12 muffins.

Hearty *Sourdough* Bran Muffin Bread

For *Hearty Sourdough Muffin Bread*, place *Hearty Sourdough Bran Muffin* batter into a well-buttered and floured loaf pan. Sprinkle the top with sanding or turbinado sugar. Bake the same as for individual muffins. Cool completely before slicing. Yields 1 loaf.

Basic Batter *Sourdough* Pancakes

Ingredients

- 1 cup activated sourdough starter
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
 - pinch of salt
 - 1 teaspoon melted butter [or light olive oil]
 - 1 large egg, beaten [or two egg whites]
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unbleached all-purpose flour
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk [canned, low fat, skim, canned/undiluted]
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Method

In a large glass bowl, stir all ingredients together gently with a wooden spoon. Mixture will be lumpy. If batter is too thick, thin with a little water or milk until the batter is the right consistency.

Bake on a hot griddle.

Serve with maple or favorite syrup. Yields 6 - 8 pancakes.

Sourdough Blueberry, Currant, Raisin, or Nut pancakes

Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fresh or canned blueberries, currants, raisins, or ground nutmeats to *Basic Batter Sourdough Pancake* batter before cooking.

Sourdough Fudge Brownie Pancakes

Add 2 tablespoons granulated sugar + two squares of unsweetened chocolate, or 2 tablespoons cocoa powder to the *Basic Batter Sourdough Pancake* batter before cooking. Serve with vanilla ice-cream or a dusting of confectioner's sugar.

Chuck-Wagon *Sourdough* Buckwheat Pancakes

Ingredients

- 2 cups activated sourdough starter
 - 1 tablespoon melted, butter [or light olive oil]
 - ½ teaspoon pure vanilla
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
 - 2 large eggs, well beaten [or 4 egg whites]
 - 1 cup buckwheat flour
 - ½ cup unbleached all-purpose flour
 - ½ teaspoon baking soda
 - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
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Method

In a large glass bowl, mix the starter, the melted, cooled butter and the vanilla.

Combine the dry ingredients and add to the wet. If batter is too thick, add a little water or milk until the batter is the right consistency.

Bake on a hot greased griddle or in a hot skillet. Turn the pancakes to cook on the other side when the tops are full of bubbles and edges are dry. Serve hot with your favorite syrup. Yields 8-10 pancakes.

Sourdough Cherry Buckwheat Pancakes

Add 1/3 to ½ cup of well-drained water packed, pitted, coarsely chopped sour or sweet cherries to the *Sourdough Buckwheat Pancake* batter before cooking. Serve with vanilla ice cream sprinkled with a 1 tablespoon of Kirsch or Grand Marnier. [You can also use fresh cherries.]

Sourdough Ginger Buckwheat Pancakes

Add pinch of fresh grated ginger and ½ teaspoon of ground cinnamon to *Sourdough Buckwheat Pancake* batter.

Sourdough Spice Buckwheat Pancakes

Add ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon, a pinch of ground nutmeg and a pinch of ground cloves to *Sourdough Buckwheat Pancake* batter.

Sourdough Dried Currant Scones

Ingredients

- 2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
 - 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
 - 2 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - pinch of ground ginger
 - ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - ¾ cup chilled butter
 - ½ cup dried currants or raisins
 - 1¼ cup activated sourdough starter
 - * 1 beaten egg white
 - * sanding sugar
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Method

In a large glass mixing bowl combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and spices.

Cut in the chilled butter with a pastry blender until the dough resembles coarse meal. Add the currants and stir to evenly distribute.

With a wooden spoon, stir in the sourdough starter. Mix quickly, like pie dough.

Turn dough out onto a floured work surface and knead 3-4 times, just until the dough holds together.

Pat the dough into a firm 8-9 inch circle. Cut the circle into eight equal wedges.

Transfer the wedges to a well-buttered cookie sheet or baking pan.

Brush the tops with beaten egg white and sprinkle with sanding sugar.

Bake in a preheated 425 degree oven for 12-15 minutes.

Remove the baked scones from the oven and cool scones on a wire rack. Yields 8 scones.

Sourdough Cheese Scones

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- pinch of cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons chilled butter
- 3 ounces grated Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup warm milk + 3 tablespoons activated sourdough starter
- * 2 tablespoons milk
- * extra grated cheese for the tops

Method

Mix together the flour, cheese, baking powder, salt and pepper. Cut in the butter with a pastry cutter and add only enough milk to hold the flour together. Dough should be crumbly.

Knead 3-4 times to hold the mixture together and then roll the dough out on a floured work surface ½ inch thick. Cut into rounds or wedges and place on a well buttered cookie sheet. Brush tops with milk and sprinkle with grated cheese.

Bake in a preheated 400 degree oven for 12-15 minutes.

Serve warm or cold. Yields 6-8 scones.

Note: Cheese Scones can be used as a *Breakfast* item, or a *Main Dish* item.