



Artisan Sourdough French Loaf Recipe

Getting Your Starter Ready

Hello there, my dear. It's your kitchen-grandma, Elowen. Let's talk about your sourdough starter. Think of it as a sleepy pet. You need to wake it up with a good meal. Feed it 4 to 12 hours before you bake. You will know it's ready when it's bubbly and happy.

An active starter makes your bread rise. It gives the loaf its special sour taste. I love watching the bubbles grow. It feels like magic is happening right in my kitchen. What name have you given your sourdough starter? I'd love to hear it.

The Magic of Mixing and Kneading

Now, put everything in a bowl. The flour, water, honey, and your lively starter. The honey is my little secret. It gives the yeast a sweet treat to eat. Then we knead. The mixer does the hard work for us.

Kneading makes the dough strong and stretchy. You want it to pass the “windowpane test.” Take a small piece and stretch it. If you can see light through it, you did it right. I still laugh at how I used to tear the dough every time. Practice makes perfect.

A Long, Cozy Rest

Put your dough in an oiled bowl. Cover it up tight. This is its long winter’s nap. Let it rest in a warm spot for 8 to 24 hours. This slow rest is so important. It builds the flavor and makes the bread easier to digest.

When you check on it the next day, it should be big and puffy. It might even have doubled in size. This slow rise matters because it makes the gluten less fussy for your tummy. Isn’t it wonderful how patience makes better bread?

Shaping Your Loaves

Now for the fun part. Gently punch the air out of the dough. It feels wonderful. Then, divide it into two equal pieces. Shape each piece into a rectangle. Roll it up like a cozy blanket and pinch the seam.

Place your shaped loaves on a baking sheet. Cover them with a towel. Let them rise again until they double. This takes a few hours. Do you prefer round loaves or long, French-style ones like this?

The Big Bake

Right before baking, make a few slashes on top with a sharp blade. This lets the bread expand beautifully in the oven. Heat your oven to 400. Now, here is my favorite trick for a crispy crust.

Put a few ice cubes in the oven when you put the bread in. The steam makes the crust golden and crackly. Doesn't that smell amazing? Bake for about 25 minutes. Fun fact: The steam from the ice helps the crust get crispy before the inside finishes cooking.

The Hardest Part

Take the beautiful, golden loaves out of the oven. They will smell like a dream. Now comes the hardest part of all. You must let the bread cool completely. I know, it is so tempting to cut it right away.

But if you wait, the inside will set perfectly. You will get neat slices instead of a gummy mess. This patience matters for the very best texture. What is your favorite thing to put on a warm slice of fresh bread? Tell me all about it.



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Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
sourdough starter	1 cup	Should be very active and bubbly
water	1 1/4 cups	
all-purpose flour	4 cups	
salt	2 teaspoons	
honey	1 tablespoon	
olive oil	2 tablespoons	



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My Favorite Sourdough French Loaf

Hello, my dear. Come sit with me. I want to share my sourdough loaf recipe. It is my go-to for a cozy afternoon. The smell fills the whole house with warmth. It reminds me of my own grandma's kitchen. She taught me that good bread takes time. But it is always worth the wait.

See also Sweet and Tangy Amish Pickles

Let's begin. First, you must wake up your sourdough starter. Feed it 4 to 12 hours before we start. You want it to be bubbly and happy. A lively starter makes the best bread. I still laugh at that time I forgot to feed mine. The loaf was so flat! (My hard-learned tip: if your kitchen is cold, let the starter sit longer. It needs the extra warmth to get bubbly.)

Step 1: Put all the ingredients into a big bowl. The honey and olive oil make the crust so nice. Now, mix it with a dough hook. Let the machine do the work for 5 to 10 minutes. The dough will become smooth and stretchy. It should pull away from the bowl's sides.

Step 2: Take a tiny piece of dough. Gently stretch it with your fingers. Can you see light through it? That is the windowpane test. It means your dough is perfect. Place the dough in an oiled bowl. Cover it tightly so it doesn't dry out. I like to use a clean tea towel.

Step 3: Now, we wait. Let the bowl sit in a warm spot for 8 to 24 hours. This is when the magic happens. The dough will grow so big! It might even double in size. I always check on it before I go to bed. It feels like a little science project on my counter.

Step 4: The next day, gently punch the dough down. It will puff right out.

Divide it into two equal pieces. Roll each piece into a flat rectangle. Then, roll it up like a cozy blanket. Pinch the seam shut so it bakes up tall. **What's your favorite part of baking bread? Share below!**

Step 5: Place your loaves on a baking sheet. Cover them and let them rise again. This takes a few hours. Preheat your oven to 400. Just before baking, make a few slashes on top with a sharp knife. This lets the steam out. For a golden crust, toss a few ice cubes into the oven. Doesn't that sizzle sound amazing?

Step 6: Bake for 25 minutes. The hardest part is waiting for it to cool. You must let it cool completely before slicing. I know it's tempting! But this keeps the inside soft. Then, you can enjoy your beautiful, crusty loaf.

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 8 hours 30 minutes (plus overnight rise)

Yield: 2 loaves

Category: Bread, Baking

Three Fun Twists to Try

Once you master the basic loaf, you can get creative. I love adding little surprises to the dough. It makes each loaf a new adventure. Here are a few of my favorite ideas. They are all simple and so tasty.

Everything Bagel Sprinkle. Before baking, brush the loaf with water. Then, sprinkle on a mix of sesame seeds, garlic, and salt. It gives the crust a wonderful, savory crunch.

See also [Spicy Garlic Chili Oil Recipe](#)

Sun-Dried Tomato and Basil. Chop up a handful of tomatoes and fresh basil. Knead them right into the dough. It turns the bread a pretty pink color. The

flavor is like summer in every bite.

Honey and Oat Crust. Brush the loaf with a little extra honey. Then, roll it in some old-fashioned oats. This makes the crust slightly sweet and very pretty. It's perfect for your morning toast.

Which one would you try first? Comment below!

How to Serve Your Beautiful Loaf

Nothing beats a warm slice with butter melting on it. That is a simple joy. But this bread is also wonderful for meals. I love it with a big bowl of soup. It's perfect for sopping up the very last drop.

For a special treat, make garlic bread. Or toast a slice and top it with mashed avocado. A sprinkle of salt on top is just right. For a drink, a cold glass of milk is my favorite. For the grown-ups, a pale ale pairs nicely with the crusty bread.

Which would you choose tonight?



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Artisan Sourdough French Loaf Recipe

Keeping Your Loaf Fresh and Tasty

Fresh bread is a true joy. To keep it that way, let it cool completely first. Then, store it in a paper bag on the counter for a day or two. For longer storage, I always freeze my loaves. I wrap them tightly in plastic wrap and pop them in a freezer bag. This keeps them from getting freezer burn.

When you are ready for bread, just thaw it on the counter. To reheat, warm slices in a 350-degree oven for five minutes. This brings back that fresh-baked feel. I once left a loaf out without wrapping it. It turned hard as a rock by the next morning!

Batch cooking saves so much time. You can mix the dough and let it ferment overnight. Then, bake two loaves at once. You can enjoy one now and freeze one for later. This matters because a homemade meal is always within reach. It makes your future self very happy.

Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!

Simple Fixes for Common Bread Troubles

Sometimes, bread does not turn out as planned. Do not worry. Most problems are easy to fix. If your bread is too dense, your starter might not have been active enough. A bubbly, happy starter makes light and airy bread. This matters because good flavor starts with a strong foundation.

If your crust is pale, try the ice cube trick. Tossing a few ice cubes into the hot oven creates steam. This steam gives you a beautiful, golden crust. I remember when I first learned this trick. It changed my bread baking forever.

If the dough feels too sticky, do not add too much extra flour. Just wet your

hands with a little water. This will help you handle it without making the dough tough. Understanding this builds your cooking confidence. You learn to work with the dough, not against it.

Which of these problems have you run into before?

Your Sourdough Questions, Answered

Q: Can I make this gluten-free?

A: You can try a one-to-one gluten-free flour blend. The texture will be a bit different, but still tasty.

Q: How far ahead can I make the dough?

A: The long ferment is perfect for making ahead. Just mix the dough before bed and bake it the next day.

See also [Smoked Salmon Patties with Crispy Flaky Texture](#)

Q: What if I do not have honey?

A: A spoonful of sugar or maple syrup works just fine. It is there to give the yeast a little treat.

Q: Can I make a smaller loaf?

A: Yes, you can cut all the ingredients in half. This makes one perfect little loaf for a small family.

Q: Is the olive oil necessary?

A: It helps keep the bread soft. But you can leave it out if you need to. Fun fact: Bakers have been making bread for thousands of years. The oldest found loaf is

over 14,000 years old!

Which tip will you try first?

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope you love making this bread as much as I do. There is nothing like the smell of fresh bread in your kitchen. It makes a house feel like a true home. I would be so delighted to see your beautiful creations.

Share a picture of your golden-brown loaf with everyone. Let us create a little gallery of homemade goodness. Your success stories warm my heart.

Have you tried this recipe? Tag us on Pinterest!

Happy cooking!

—Elowen Thorn.

You need to try !

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Artisan Sourdough French Loaf Recipe

Author: Elowen Thorn

Cooking Method: [Baking](#)

Cuisine: [French](#)

Courses: [Side](#)

Difficulty: **Beginner**

Prep time: **30 minutes**

Cook time: **25 minutes**

Rest time: **8 minutes**

Total time: **9 minutes**

Servings:**2 loaves**

Calories:**98 kcal**

Best Season:**Summer**

Description

A classic, crusty loaf made with a sourdough starter for a deep flavor and

perfect texture.

Ingredients

- ☐ 1 cup sourdough starter
- ☐ 1 1/4 cups water
- ☐ 2 teaspoon salt
- ☐ 4 cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ 1 tablespoon honey
- ☐ 2 tablespoons olive oil

Instructions

1. Feed your starter 4-12 hours before starting this recipe. It should be very active and bubbly.
2. To your mixing bowl, add all of the ingredients.
3. Knead in a stand mixer using the dough hook until stretchy and pulling away from the sides of the bowl. This should take about 5-10 minutes. It should pass the 'windowpane' test, which is when you take a small piece of the dough and try to stretch it into a square-like shape. If you can stretch it thin enough where you can "see through it", then the gluten formation is adequate.
4. Place in a large, oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap, beeswax wrap, or something that is airtight. This will keep the dough moist, preventing it from developing a hard skin.
5. Allow to ferment for 8 to 24 hours in a warm place. The next day, it should have at least doubled in size.
6. Punch down the dough. Divide into two equal parts.
7. Shape it by rolling the dough into a flat rectangle (about 1/4 - 1/2 inch thickness) and roll up. Pinch the seam.
8. Place French bread dough onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.

9. Cover with a towel and allow to rise until doubled again. This could take a few hours depending on how warm your kitchen is.
10. Slash with lame.
11. Preheat to 400. Bake for 25 minutes. (For a more golden crust, add ice cubes in the oven. This helps add moisture and steam to make that golden, crustier crust.)
12. Once it is done baking, pull it out of the oven and allow to cool completely before slicing.

Notes

For a more golden crust, add ice cubes to the oven during baking to create steam.

Keywords:Sourdough, French Bread, Artisan Bread, Loaf