

Whole Wheat Bread from Starter

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Aug 2005

Disclaimer: The processes used in making this bread are drawn from “The Bread Baker’s Apprentice” it is paraphrased and rewritten slightly more to my style of baking.

Day 1 - *Firm Starter*

1 cup (7 ounces) Barm

1 1/3 cups (6 ounces) whole wheat flour

2/3 cup (3 ounces) spelt flour

About 1/2 cup (4 ounces) water, at room temperature

In a 4-quart bowl mix together barm, flours, and enough water to make a firm ball. Knead this for about 3 minutes or until all the flour has hydrated, and everything is evenly mixed. Clean and dry out the mixing bowl. Lightly oil the bowl. Place the ball into the bowl rolling it about to get it covered in oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap.

Leave out at room temperature for 4-6 hours or until dough doubles in size then refrigerate over night.

Day 2 - *Final Dough*

4 2/3 cups (22 ounces) whole-wheat flour

2 1/3 cups (10 ounces) spelt flour

2 tablespoons (.81 ounce) gray sea salt

2 to 3 3/4 cups (18 to 22 ounces) water, lukewarm (90° to 100° F)

Semolina flour or fine bread crumbs for dusting

Note about Salt: *Poilâne insists on the gray Normandy sea salt...*remember, the coarser the salt the less it weighs per teaspoon. So 1 teaspoon of table salt is almost equal to 2 teaspoons of coarse sea salt or kosher salt¹.

Take the firm starter out of the refrigerator 1 hour before use. Cut or pull apart into a dozen pieces, then spread out on a baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap and let it rest to take the chill off.

In a 5-quart bowl stir together the all pieces of the firm starter, flours, salt, and enough water to bring everything together into a soft dough. Turn out onto the counter and knead for 15 minutes adjusting the flour and water as needed to keep the dough supple and tacky but not sticky. Everything should be evenly distributed, and the dough should pass the windowpane test. Clean out the 5 quart bowl, dry it, and then lightly oil it. Roll the dough around in the bowl to coat it in oil. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Let rise at room temperature for about 4 hours or until nearly doubled in size.

Prepare your bannetons for rising. If you do not have bannetons or other rising baskets you can use a 5-quart mixing bowl. To prepare a mixing bowl for rising line the bowl with fabric, The cloth is tightly woven and heavy – duck, denim, or light canvas². Spray oil onto the fabric and then dust it with flour.

Gently transfer the risen dough to the counter and form into a large “boule” or ball. Place the boule into the rising basket seam side up. Spray the top lightly with oil or dust with a little flour. Cover with a layer of plastic wrap. Let this rise for another 2-3 hours until about 1 ½ times its original size.

NOTE: Rather than rising on the counter, you can retard the rise in the refrigerator over night. Take it out of the refrigerator 4 hours before you bake it.

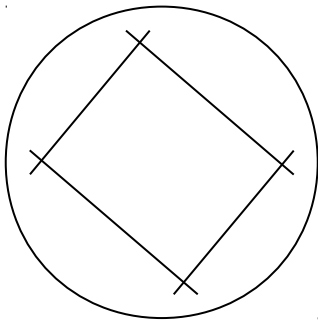
Preparing an oven for baking:

Put one shelf on the bottom most level, on this put an old 9 inch pie tin (one with no holes in it, but don't mind if it gets ruined) fill the pie tin with walnut and golf ball sized stones. This will be used to create the steam needed when baking starts.

Put the next shelf on the next level up, on this put a pizza stone or tiles. One hour before the dough is ready for baking pre-heat the oven to 500° F. It does take this long to get all the rocks and stone up to optimal temperature. Get 1 cup of water ready near the stove to be added to the pie tin right after the bread goes in the oven.

When the bread is ready to come out of the rising basket, generously dust a peel with the semolina or fine breadcrumbs. The bread crumbs are made from bread that has gone stale, in using them like this the bread is re-used rather than just feeding birds or throwing it away.

Gently turn the risen dough out onto the peel, and if need be, remove the cloth carefully. Score the bread with a large # sign, along the top edges.



Now to work a little quickly. Open the oven door and slide the dough off onto the center of the baking stone. Pull out the bottom rack and pour the cup of water over the stones in the pie tin, careful of splashing. Push in the rack and close the oven door. Reduce the oven temp to 450° F.

After 20 minutes rotate the bread on the stone 180° and lower the oven temp to 425° F then continue to bake another 20 to 30 minutes until it sounds hollow, or the center registers 200° F. If the bottom is getting too dark place an inverted sheet pan under it. If the top is getting too dark, tent foil over the top of it.

Once the bread is done, remove it from the oven and let it cool on a rack for 2 hours. It can be stored in a brown paper bag and should be good for 5 to 7 days.

Bibliography:

Original recipe from:

Reinhart, Peter. The Bread Baker's Apprentice
Berkley: 10 Speed Press. 2001
Sourdough breads: Poilâne-Style Miche
pg 242-254

Additional information from:

Poilâne Bakery ingredients page.
August 8 2005 [http://www.poilane.fr/index.php?
index_module=listings&index_theme=english&index_template=en_ingredients.htm](http://www.poilane.fr/index.php?index_module=listings&index_theme=english&index_template=en_ingredients.htm)

- 1 Reinhart, Peter. The Bread Baker's Apprentice.
Berkley: 10 Speed Press. 2001.
Pg. 243 sidebar
- 2 Clayton, Bernard. The Breads of France and how to bake them in your own Kitchen.
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Pg. 13