

Sourdough Bread (Spelt or Whole Wheat)

<http://gnowfglins.com/2009/09/10/spelt-sourdough-bread/>

Want to know what's so great about sourdough bread? Read [The Differences Between Quick-Yeasted Bread and Wild-Yeasted Sourdough Bread](#).

As promised, here is the recipe I'm currently following for spelt sourdough bread - for sandwiches or free-form loaves. I really love working with spelt because the resulting baked goods are usually light, fluffy and moist. Once I get the recipe right, that is.

But working with spelt is different than working with wheat. You use less of it, for one thing. The dough will seem wet (compared to wheat flour dough) but if you add more flour, the dough gets hard and the resulting product is usually dense and heavy. So resist the urge to add more flour. I'll tell you in the recipe what characteristics of dough you want.

Another difference is that the gluten is more fragile, so you should knead it less than you would wheat. In the Bosch mixer, you'd knead for 6 minutes on speed 2 (newer models), or 4-5 minutes on speed 3 (newer models). Older Bosch models only have speeds 1 and 2 - and 2 is more like speed 3 on the newer models, so you'd be kneading on speed 2 for 4-5 minutes.

This recipe can easily be doubled in the Bosch, and perhaps even tripled.

Edit: I have been using this recipe with whole wheat - hard red wheat to be precise. It is luscious bread, too! The differences: wheat makes a thicker starter, so sometimes I use a little less flour because of that. Which is surprising because usually, one needs to use more wheat flour than spelt. This is all about the dough - you want smooth, elastic, not sticky, and not dry. Also, kneading time for whole wheat is 8 to 10 minutes in the Bosch.

Spelt Sourdough Bread

Makes 2 loaves

- 3 cups sourdough starter
- 1 cup pure water
- 1 generous tablespoon sea salt (adjust to taste)
- 5 to 6 cups organic spelt flour, preferably fresh ground, but allowed to cool to room temperature
- more whole spelt flour and pure water for feeding the starter
- extra virgin coconut oil – for oiling bowls, pans, and/or tops of loaves (or grass-fed butter)

Get the starter out of the refrigerator. Feed it with equal parts spelt flour and pure water, so that you can take out 3 cups and still leave starter behind, preferably as much as you took out. Let it come to room temperature, about an hour.

Combine the starter, water and salt in the mixing bowl. Mix on speed 1. Add 4 cups spelt flour. Mix in, still on speed 1. Add 1/4 cup more flour at a time, until the dough is springy and pulls away from the sides of the mixing bowl. You are looking for the dough to be a bit gloppy and sticky, but still be warm and smooth. Sometimes when you test the dough it really wants to stick to your finger - you want it only mildly sticky and more wanting to stick to itself than you. Make sense? Resist wanting to add more flour; it will not behave like wheat.

If using mixer, increase mixer speed to dough setting (Speed 2 on newer Bosch Universal) and knead for 6 minutes. If using an older Bosch, the speed 2 is like the newer speed 3 - so knead for 4-5 minutes and then check dough for good elasticity. Otherwise, knead by hand for 8 to 12 minutes, until dough is smooth and elastic.

Transfer dough to a well-oiled large bowl. Rotate dough around so it gets coated on all sides, top and bottom, with the oil in the bowl. Cover bowl with a damp towel or plastic wrap. Place in the fridge for 12 hours or overnight, until doubled in size. Or place in a warm location in your home (no more than 80 degrees) for five to six hours, until doubled in size.

Separate dough into two portions. Shape loaves and place in oiled loaf pans, or arrange free form on an oiled baking sheet. For loaf pans: cut into top of each loaf 3 times diagonally with a sharp knife. For free-form loaves: cut an X into the top of each loaf with a sharp knife. Put pans in a warm place draft-free place to rise, such as near (but not on) the burner that vents the oven's heat. The rising time here is up to you. I let my loaves double in size and it takes about an hour or two, depending on room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Transfer the pans to the preheated oven. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes, until the tops are nicely browned and the loaves sound hollow when tapped. Turn loaves out onto cooling racks. Brush with oil or butter, or cover with a towel to keep crust soft.

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