

## **Simple Sourdough Pan Bread Hand Mixed with a Low Knead Procedure**

**Makes two large loaves**

### **Ingredients**

- 1 Cup Active Sourdough Culture
- 2 Cups Water
- 5 to 6 Cups Flour (divided)
- 1 Tablespoon Salt

### **Method**

#### **Make the sponge**

Six to ten hours before making the dough, put one cup active starter into a bowl and add two cups of water and two cups of flour. Stir until reasonably smooth, cover and set aside. The time for this step will vary. Ideally, you would want to go to the next step when the sponge had reached peak activity. I just make the sponge before I go to bed at night and make the dough the next morning when I get around to it. The timing is not critical. If the sponge looks active, it will be fine.

#### **Make the dough**

Stir one tablespoon of salt into the sponge. Add three cups of flour to the sponge one cup at a time. Stir to incorporate after each addition. I always stop at this point and judge the dough. With experience, you will know exactly how much additional flour is required. Until you have enough experience, add flour 1/4 cup at a time until you have a medium dough. It will probably take two 1/4-cup additions. You will most likely have to give up your spoon or dough whisk and finish mixing the dough by hand. Cover the dough and let it rest for twenty to thirty minutes so the flour can absorb the water.

#### **Knead the dough**

Knead the dough for 15 to 20 seconds. I do this right in the bowl. Cover and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes. Repeat the short knead twice more for a total of three short kneads. Cover the dough and let rise for one to two hours. It does not need to double, but it should definitely increase in volume by at least 50%. This will take longer in cool temperatures.

## **Stretch and fold**

Dump the dough onto a lightly oiled or floured work surface. Gently stretch the dough into a rough rectangle about one third as high as the dough was when dumped on the counter. Fold the dough into thirds like a letter, and then fold the dough in thirds in the other direction. Round the lump of dough and put it in a clean, lightly oiled bowl, cover and let rise until fully doubled.

## **Shape the dough**

Divide the dough into two equal pieces, round, cover, and let rest for 15 to 20 minutes. Form the rounded dough into loaves to fit your bread pans. Place the dough into buttered bread pans, cover with oiled plastic wrap and set aside to rise.

## **Final rise**

When the dough reaches the top of the pans remove the plastic and make your decorative expansion cuts on the top of the loaf. Place the pans in a covered container to finish the rise. I put the pans in a plastic grocery bag and close the top with a twist tie.

## **Bake the bread**

When the bread is fully raised, place in a 375° F oven and bake until done - about 40 minutes. Cool before cutting.

## **Notes**

The directions for making the dough call for adding flour and mixing to a medium dough. The dough will become softer after the rest and the short knead steps. The end result is a soft and easy to handle dough.

Kneading. You can use conventional kneading if you wish. After mixing the dough, let it rest for 30 minutes, then knead until the dough is soft and supple. However why work that hard?

Bread flour will give a higher rise, but All Purpose Flour will work just fine. This recipe has been tested with a variety of flours and all have produced acceptable results.

Some taste testers preferred a little less salt. You might try 2 ½ teaspoons and see if that suits your taste.

This is a simple bread, however it makes a great tasting loaf. I like it just as well as some bread that is made by more complicated procedures.

Turn this into a nice whole wheat bread by substituting 1 ½ cups of whole wheat flour for

an equal amount of white flour and add one tablespoon of honey and two tablespoons of molasses.