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Sourdough Bread Recipe
By Lucia Akard

1. Begin by unearthing your starving sourdough culture from the fridge about a week before you want to bake. You haven’t planned this far ahead for something since you got invited to your best friend’s cousin’s wedding at Disney World (tacky, I know), but now you’re the Proud Mother of millions of strands of yeast bacteria, or whatever, and apparently that involves planning your life around when you’re going to bake. (Don’t think about whether baking the bread actually kills your new children, that way leads to madness).

2. Pour off the grey alcohol that has formed on top. If you ever go to prison for, say, murdering millions of strands of bacteria repeatedly, or people, you’ll at least know how to make hooch.

3. Stir. Feed twice a day with a mixture of whatever amount of flour you feel like and 1/8th cups of water. Don’t measure with a scale, ever, because that is for real bakers, and the Brits.

4. Repeat step 3 until your baby (hopefully you will have named him/her/them by this point—trust me it helps you bond) no longer smells like the inside of a sweaty jockstrap, and instead smells like a slightly cleaner, less sweaty jockstrap belonging to an NFL player who is worth millions and whose jockstrap you could sell on EBay for hundreds.

5. Baking day!

6. Wake up in a panic. It’s 11am and you have missed crucial baking time and have yet again failed at being a ~real baker~.

7. Feed the demon.

8. Wait.

10. Stop opening the jar to check if it’s ready!

11. Check again.

12. Ahhh! Finally, beautiful, bubbly, risen perfection. It’s 3pm and all you’ve done so far is worry about your sourdough starter.

13. Pour out 3 ½ ish cups of flour. Try to level them off but don’t because really, it doesn’t matter, and you don’t care anyway.

14. Add some salt, not sure how much, not too much, maybe a tablespoon? Whatever feels right.

15. Measure, or don’t, 2 ½ cups of starter. Leave like at least 1 tablespoon in there so that you can grow your bacteria minions anew.

16. Add maybe ¾ cups of water. Not cold water. Warmish water, like the temperature of a hot bath gone lukewarm. Stir it all together with a wooden spoon or silicon spatula. Metal is a no-go here.


18. Some more kneading. At this point, you should be starting to hate Taylor Swift. (Why is she so blonde and thin and rich? Why doesn’t she care about anyone but herself and like, other blonde rich people? Why are her songs so insidiously catchy? Why can’t you stop listening??)

19. After maybe 10 ish minutes of kneading, tear off a small piece of dough and stretch it between your fingers. If the light shines through without it tearing, you are ready. The gluten is fully formed. Canons locked and loaded. The empire’s ship is within range.
20. Lightly grease a plastic bowl, or the enormous ceramic one that cost your mother $200 that you only ever use for rising bread. Cover with cling film.

21. Wait 2-3 hours until it doubles. Or looks bigger at least.

22. Punch it down. I know, it feels like you’ve just murdered someone. Fold it over once, and then again. Make sure there are no air bubbles.

23. Take 1 colander and 2 tea towels. Flour one towel and lay it in the colander. Shape the bread into a boule or like, a round bread shaped thingy. Place in colander and cover with other towel.

24. Heat oven to 450F whatever°C and place a large oven-proof pot inside. The pot must have a lid.

25. Give the dough another 45 minutes to an hour. Then, uncover, and using your towels, flip it into the hot pot.

26. Get a razor, or a very sharp knife. Just not the razor you use to shave your legs. Look at Instagram pictures of sourdough for inspo, but end up just slicing one curved line in the top. This will help your bread expand and rise properly. If you slice the bread and it deflates...I’m sorry. You’ve lost. Do not pass go. Do not collect $200. Your bread it a failure. Hurl it against the wall and then scrape it into the recycling only bin so that the Oxford garbage workers refuse to pick up your trash on Thursday evening and your housemates murder you in a garbage-fueled rage.

27. Flour/seed/oatmeal the top of it. Doesn’t do much for taste but it looks nicer this way. You can’t Instagram an unfloured loaf of bread.
28. Bake the bread, lid on, for 30 minutes. Then, reduce the temp to 400F and uncover. Bake for 15 more minutes.

29. Remove from oven.

30. Dump contents of pot (one misshapen, half risen boule) onto counter.

31. Let cool for 30 sec max before slicing.

32. Eat with large helping of butter and convince yourself it tastes amazing. Really, you've just burned your taste buds off, but it's deee-licious anyways.

33. Your housemates love it. Everyone loves it. Everyone thinks that this mediocre skill that a one-armed French man from the tiers état in the 17th century could do better than you with his eyes closed is INCREDIBLE. You baked a bread, rather than going to Tesco and buying a day old loaf for 14p. Inadvertently you realize you've discovered the real reason the French Revolution happened: poorly leavened bread and the ensuing self-hatred.

34. Place your yeast culture back in the fridge. Repeat steps 1-33, monthly, ad nauseum, until you finally produce a loaf of bread that Gordon Ramsey would not deride (much) on Twitter.

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*The author would like you to know that even though this bread looks good and tastes delicious, it's far from her best work.*

❖❖❖
The cracks in my memory have followed me to England. Long after the autumn leaves are dust-ground beneath my feet, I keep a map of fissures back home: those who stopped calling, those who disappeared. Without them, I half-exist. Upon meeting a new friend I recall one of old, her laugh hovering over your shoulder. You are never just you: in each stranger’s eyes I search for a sign, a key to some history buried within genteel walls. Yet memory is a curious art – it never paints the same scene twice. In my mind I’ve stumbled home to whirlwinds of sly whispers and staccato smiles, only to leave over and over.

Perhaps the only step forward is to trace a path from the outskirts of my memories to their roots, marking each silence with a decision: a bridge, a turn of heart, a goodbye.
Holidays at Linacre

Christmas Dinner

Mark Quinlan (pictured) and his wife Mariko Nakahara stayed at Linacre over Christmas. Mariko writes:

“We were the team of ‘turkey sitters.’ We managed to put the turkey into the oven, baste and roast and finally dished out 4 hours later.

We had incredible fun. The small secret was that Udit left me in charge of turkey but I have never cooked it before!”

Lunar (Chinese) New Year Dinner

On February 17th, students gathered at Linacre to celebrate Lunar (Chinese) New Year.

The celebration began with a presentation about the Bai people by Linacre’s own Pengjin Wang, followed by a delicious feast from Café Orient and a hands-on tie-dye workshop led by Pengjin.

This is the sixth year that Linacre hosts a Chinese New Year dinner. Thank you to our international student representative – Mariel Tavakoli – for organizing!
A Recipe
By Derek Xu

A clock beeps—it is eight in the morning, and a hand reaches out to fall upon the alarm. With a groan, a man sits up, blankets falling off his chest. Morning light, dimmed by heavy curtains, reveals a skinny fat build that barely fills out the undershirt he wears. After a second, he swings his legs over the edge of the full-sized bed, and stands up. It's time to start the day.

The man brushes his teeth, spitting into one of a pair of sinks. Walking back into the bedroom, he slips on a wrinkled white button-up that had been strewn on the ground, and fastens on a tie, carelessly checking his reflection in a mirror. Next to the mirror hangs a set of staff photos, all depicting the man in different industrial kitchens, part of different smiling staff. After halfheartedly attempting to flatten a cowlick, he exits the bedroom.

Breakfast is a simple affair: a bowl of milk and cereal amidst a sea of dirty tableware. Old takeout containers cover the kitchen counter and overflow from the trashcan, and the stove has an air of neglect; cookware gathers dust atop the gas burners, and all that can be heard are the steady crunch of cereal and the clinking of the spoon.

Presently the man finishes, and gets up from the table, revealing a newspaper clipping pinned to the wall behind him. It depicts the opening of a small restaurant—unassuming and modest, with looks that belied the warm atmosphere and delicious nature of the food served inside. The man, much younger, stands in front with an exuberant smile that starkly contrasts the worn look he currently wears as he walks past a few Hallmark cards stacked next to a landline, blinking with the weight of ignored calls and unheard messages.

Shrugging into a jacket, the man gropes among empty microwaveables, and pulls out a key. As he exits the kitchen, stepping around bags of trash, he closes the door behind him, and a forlorn pair of his and her aprons swings on their hooks.

As the man walks down the hallway beyond the door, he passes a series of photos hung on the walls: a vibrant young woman, laughing, a few strands of golden blonde hair peeking out from the chef’s hat as she tries it on her head. The woman, holding a blackened pan, staring at the photographer with a singed face. The man, standing behind, guiding her as she chops vegetables. The man, tasting soup, the woman watching with trepidation. A staff photo—the couple standing proudly in front. A wedding.
A subway ride and a few doors later, the man arrives at work. Lost in a sea of cubicles, he sits down at his desk. A certificate lays on one corner, fancy curly font proclaiming its message to the world—Supplies and Things Congratulates You on Your First Year!

The man stares at the small stack of papers in front of him. After a while he leans underneath to boot up an old desktop, and after the start-up chime, opens a few spreadsheets and pulls the first paper off the stack. Reaching over, he sets into motion a Newton’s cradle on his desk. Back and forth the balls click. Back and forth.

*Clank.*

The subway shudders and slows, and the man sways with the carriage as it comes to a stop. He reaches down to keep a takeout bag from toppling over, and the doors open. A swarm of people crowd in, pushing the man against the wall.

“Hey, hey!” he calls out, but it’s too late. The bag has been knocked over, its contents trampled under the rush of bodies. He silently stares at the crushed bag as the others curse and kick off the remains of curry.

Back in his apartment, the man opens a cupboard and looks around, searching. Nothing seems to satisfy his gaze, and he opens another, groping inside. He pulls out a microwaveable, but after a brief inspection, discards it. Expired. He digs around some more, shifting boxes and containers. As he searches a small wooden box falls out, spilling its worn note cards. A grunt, and the man gathers them up, ready to shove them back into the box.

Suddenly he stops—one of the cards is a different color, newer than the others. A block of text is written on it in an elegant hand, contrasting with the rough scribbles that bullet out ingredients and instructions on the other cards.

Almost hesitantly, he reads the card. As he scans each line, his eyes tighten slightly. He looks up after reading it, stares at the news clipping across the room, then at the aprons hanging on the door, and glances back at the note. His hand grips it. He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath, exhales, and opens them again.

The tightness is gone, replaced by a light that wasn’t there before. He tucks the card into his pocket, and leaves the apartment, returning with brown paper grocery bags stuffed with fresh ingredients. He brushes the clutter off the table, placing the bags down before turning back towards the kitchen door. A slight pause as he reaches it.

He unhooks an apron.

✦✦✦
Sift 750 g strong bread flour and 10 g (about 2 tsp) salt into a bowl. (A high-gluten flour is essential for getting that famously chewy texture. Unfortunately most flours in the UK that are labeled “strong” - or even “very strong” - are actually rather wimpy so read the nutrition label carefully! We used one with 13.6% protein, which is the minimum you should aim for.)

Whisk together 7 g active dry yeast (one standard sachet or roughly 2 tsp), 350 ml lukewarm water and 5 ml (1 tsp) barley malt syrup/extract in a large mixing bowl. Wait 5 minutes until frothy. Whisk in another 15 ml (1 tbsp) of the malt syrup.

Add the sifted flour to the yeasty water and combine with a dough scraper until the mixture comes together into a rough dough.

Transfer to a clean work surface and knead briefly until well mixed and no white flecks of flour are visible. Let rest for 5 min.

Knead the dough until smooth and elastic, about 7-8 minutes. You'll really need to put in some elbow grease here! The dough should spring back slowly when you make an indentation with your finger.

Place the dough back in the bowl and cover with cling film. Prove at room temperature for a couple of hours before transferring to the fridge to ferment overnight. (Alternatively, shape the bagels as described below and prove them overnight in the fridge.)

Portion the bagels by cutting into 12 pieces. Take one piece and gently flatten into a disk about 4-5 mm thick. (If your bagels involve any flavoring, add it now.) Tuck in toward the middle, turn over and gently roll into a cylinder/sausage, about 10 inches/25 cm long. Bring the two ends together, overlapping by about 2 cm, and press to seal. (Moisten the ends with a bit of water if they don’t stick.) Then roll back and forth on a clean work surface with your palm to smooth out the join. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and cover with a tea towel. Repeat with the remaining pieces.
Let the formed bagels prove for 20 minutes.

Preheat the over to 240 deg C.

Prepare your toppings and keep at the ready (on separate plates). Poppy and sesame seeds are traditional, but for the ultimate New York experience - an “everything bagel” - see the recipe below.

Whisk 30 ml (2 Tbsp) of malt syrup into a pot of water and bring to a simmer. Gently drop a bagel in and poach for about 15 seconds on each side. Fish out with a skimmer and drain briefly on a rack before dipping in the topping. Flip over to coat the other side. Transfer back to the parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining bagels.

Bake for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Recipe for “everything bagel” topping:
Finely chop 4-5 cloves of garlic and 1 small yellow onion. Toast in a dry frying pan over a medium-low heat, stirring frequently to prevent burning, until beginning to brown. Transfer to a bowl and stir in 5 g (2 tsp) each of poppy and sesame seeds, and 5 g (1 tsp) of coarse sea salt (more or less to taste).

If you liked this recipe, you will love Samar Khatiwala’s blog, Oishi Rasoi: http://www.oishiirasoi.com/, where you can find recipes for:

- Middle Eastern flatbread with dried fenugreek leaves (kasoori methi)
- Austrian noodles with poppy seeds (Mohnnudeln)
- Peruvian-style beef skewers (anticuchos) with aji amarillo sauce
- And more!

Samar is one of the founders of the Linacre Cooking Club (LiCC). The LiCC holds several events throughout the year.
Photography
By Karrar Ali

Bodleian Library

Oxford Street, London

Griffiths Building,
Linacre College
Broad Street, early morning

London Eye and Christmas lights

Linacre College quad on a wet evening
Kindergarten MBA
By Ashley Tsai

In the underground laboratory full of cutting-edge equipment, carcinogenic chemicals, and brilliant scientists at the University of California, Berkeley, there hung a cheerful, innocuous poster of Robert Fulghum’s poem, “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” That colorful poster made me smile when I worked in the laboratory in between classes, and I filed it away in my mind as something cute, fun, slightly cheeky.

Fast forward four years. Earlier in 2018, the lingering embers of my new-year-new-me optimism were rekindled when I came across Andrew Ross Sorkin’s article in The New York Times about Laurence D. Fink’s letter (“BlackRock’s Message: Contribute to Society, or Risk Losing Our Support”). Apparently Mr. Fink, chairman and CEO of BlackRock, had issued a letter that was “likely to cause a firestorm in the corner offices of companies everywhere.”

What were the explosive contents of this letter? In underlined font, Mr. Fink emphasized that “[t]o prosper over time, every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution to society.” The letter went on to champion workforce diversity, environmental sustainability, and community responsibility as essential ingredients for long-term value and growth (the phrase “long-term” was used over twenty times in the three-page letter).

I was initially astonished when I read these statements coming from the head of the largest asset manager in the world, and I was not the only one. Mr. Sorkin notes in his article that Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, an expert on executive leadership at the Yale School of Management, had seen “nothing like it.” As a proponent of corporate social responsibility, I was elated by Mr. Fink’s letter. Perhaps the business paradigm of the pursuit of profit regardless of environmental and societal costs was finally shifting.

A few days later, that poster of Robert Fulghum’s poem flashed in my head again.

“Share everything. Play fair. Don’t hit people. Put things back where you found them.” ‘Wait a second!’ I thought to myself. Are we actually flabbergasted that a grown man who is in charge of thousands of employees and trillions of dollars is applying lessons from kindergarten, and lauding him for doing so?

Why is it so stunning that business leaders should care about the planet and its inhabitants? Why has it taken so long for a letter like Mr. Fink’s to be distributed? Don’t get me wrong - the sentiment behind his letter is certainly one to be celebrated, especially coming from someone with as much influence as Mr. Fink. The true test will be whether those words are backed by concrete action. As customers and consumers, we need to hold businesses accountable to their professed values, and hold them to at least kindergarten standards.

Let’s not forget what we learned as children. “Don’t take things that aren’t yours. Say you’re sorry when you hurt somebody. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.”

★★★★
ACROSS

2. Our new Social Secs
5. The one who puts treats in your pigeon hole
7. Keble-Linacre ___ Bop
10. May 19th theme!!
13. March 6th special dinner
14. It’s the road we call home

DOWN

1. Volunteers you can talk to
2. It lists all CR social events
3. Tuesdays at 5:45pm
4. You may book it for events
6. We got them refurbished this term!
8. ___-Linacre Disco Bop
9. Every Sunday at 7pm
11. This fund accepts a range of applications
12. ___ (Chinese) New Year Dinner
Ciao for now