

My Method for Sourdough Pandemic Bread

So I've been making bread every couple of days for the last several months. I've come up with a method for sourdough that doesn't require constant attention to the starter, and I end up with two loaves of tasty and satisfying bread, ideal for sandwiches or french toast. It's based on [a recipe](#) I found over at King Arthur Flour website, but I've made a couple of slight modifications to the ingredients and the method. This bread requires two days to make, but most of that time, the dough is just sitting.

It starts with the sourdough. You'll need a good and lively sourdough starter. There are plenty of sites that can walk you through the creation of the sourdough starter. It took me about 3 weeks of high maintenance sourdough starter feeding to end up with mine, but now, I only feed mine on the day I start making the bread ... about every 4 days. I keep mine on the counter in a mason jar, covered with a damp paper towel. I keep a rubber band around the jar, so I can keep track of how much the starter grows after I feed it. When I do feed it, I add 100g of all-purpose flour, and 100g of lukewarm tap water. I feed it first thing in the morning when I'm making breakfast, and by lunchtime, it's ready to be used.

1 c. fed sourdough starter
100g wheat flour
560g all-purpose flour (split, 262g on day 1 and 298g on day 2)
1 2/3 lukewarm water
1 1/2 t. yeast
2 t. salt
1 T. nonfat dry milk powder
2 T. olive oil

I measure out 1 cup of the fed starter and add it to the mixing bowl. Then I add 100g of wheat flour, and 262g of all-purpose flour, along with the water. I mix it with a spatula, and then cover the bowl with a damp towel, and set it on the counter. After 2 hours or so, there will be bubbles on the surface. I put the bowl and towel into the refrigerator and let it sit until the next day.

On the second day, I add the yeast, salt, notfat dry milk, and olive oil, and 298g of all-purpose flour, and mix it with a dough hook, slowly at first, and then medium speed for a couple of minutes. (You can take it out and knead it by hand if you want, but it's not strictly necessary.) Again, cover the bowl with a damp kitchen towel and allow it to rise for several hours, until doubled in size.

Remove the dough from the bowl onto a floured work surface, and cut it in half. Flatten each dough ball into a loose triangle, with the base of the triangle no wider than your loaf pan. Roll the dough from top to bottom, making sure to adhere the dough as you roll it, to avoid large air bubbles in the final loaf. Put the rolled log into a lightly greased loaf pan, seam side down. Repeat for the second loaf, then cover with the towel, and let rise until the dough peaks up over the side of the loaf pan.

Put the pans into the middle of a preheated 425° oven, and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from oven, and let cool enough to handle, and then remove the loaves from the pan, and completely cool on a wire rack for several hours, and then store them in a loose plastic bag.

Strawberry Jam

This jam in midwinter tastes as fresh as the berries tasted the previous summer. The secret is to make small batches and to not overcook. The jam tends to be thinner (excellent for pancakes or ice-cream topping!) and less gummy than store-bought, but the fresh flavor cannot be beat. If you prefer thicker jam, you might experiment with adding some pectin.

1 lb. fresh strawberries, blueberries, raspberries or other berries

2 cups sugar

Wash and clean berries, and place whole (do not crush!) into medium sized saucepan with 1 cup of sugar. Warm over low heat while stirring gently and occasionally until the sugar melts and forms a syrup. Turn heat up to medium high and bring to a boil until foam appears on the top. Skim the foam, add the second cup of sugar, and boil just until jam forms a sheet on the end of your spoon. (Do not overcook – if you do, the jam will slowly transform itself into something that tastes no different from store-bought!) Pour into sterilized jars (leave enough headroom for ice expansion), seal jars with sterilized jar lids, cool, and store in the freezer.

Things to Add to Omelets

Brown eggs taste no different from white eggs. Rhode Island Red hens give you

brown eggs ... the older the hen, the darker the egg.

Creamed or plain chipped beef;

Crumbled, crisp bacon bits;

Strips of thinly sliced ham or bologna (fried);

Fried minced onions, scallions, green peppers, pimentos;

Creamed or sauteed mushrooms;

Minced leftover vegetables (especially spinach) or meat in a thick cream sauce;

Freshly grated Gruyere, Swiss, Parmesan, Romano, or cheddar cheese;

Chopped fresh herbs: chives, parsley, chervil, tarragon, or thyme;

Flaked cooked fish (minus skin and bones), leftover or canned;

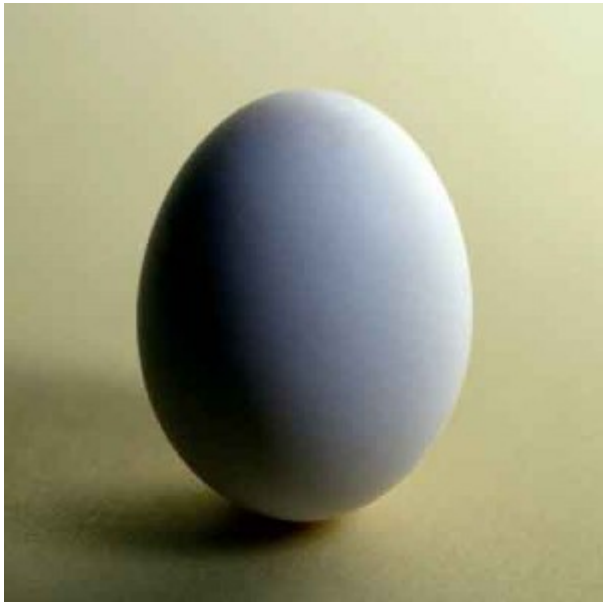
Minced lobster, crab, or shrimp;

Chopped canned anchovies ...

Really, though, the possibilities are endless, provided its cut up very fine and, aside from the fresh herbs, precooked.

What's inside your favorite omelet?

Truth or Consequences : Egg Labels



The New York Times has [a pretty good article](#) about the information you'll find on an egg carton ... what's required, what the government allows them to claim, and what's just creative story-telling.

*“For eggs from chickens that live in the sort of utopia conveyed by the images on most egg cartons, look for **“animal welfare approved.”** Available in limited markets, it is a new label by the Animal Welfare Institute that is given only to independent family farmers. Flocks can have no more than 500 birds, and chickens over 4 weeks old must be able to spend all their time outside on pesticide-free pasture with a variety of vegetation. They must have access to dust baths and cannot have their beaks trimmed (a practice on crowded egg farms) or be fed animal byproducts.”*