

COLD FERMENTED BREAD RECIPE

Ingredients (*Serves: 1 medium artisan loaf*)

- **500g Bread Flour** (*Preferably unbleached, high-protein for better structure*)
 - **350ml Filtered Water** (*Cool, at around 20°C for optimal hydration*)
 - **10g Sea Salt** (*Enhances flavor without overpowering*)
 - **2g Instant Yeast** (*For slow and consistent fermentation*)
 - Optional: 50g Sourdough Starter (*Adds complexity to flavor*)
-

Special Tools

1. Digital kitchen scale
 2. Mixing bowl
 3. Bench scraper
 4. Proofing basket (banneton)
 5. Dutch oven or baking stone
 6. Parchment paper
-

Procedure

Step 1: Mix the Dough (10 minutes)

1. In a large bowl, mix the bread flour and salt.
2. Dissolve the yeast (and optional sourdough starter) in the water.
3. Gradually pour the water mixture into the flour, stirring with a spatula until fully combined.
4. Use your hands to knead lightly inside the bowl until the dough comes together into a shaggy ball.

Step 2: Autolyse (30 minutes)

1. Cover the dough with a damp cloth and let it rest for 30 minutes.
 - This process allows the flour to hydrate and gluten to develop naturally, enhancing structure and texture.

Step 3: Knead and Develop (5–7 minutes)

1. After the autolyse, knead the dough lightly until smooth and elastic.
2. Perform the “stretch and fold” technique every 30 minutes for the next 2 hours.
 - This involves gently stretching one side of the dough and folding it over itself to build strength.

Step 4: Cold Fermentation (12–48 hours)

1. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl and cover it tightly with plastic wrap.
2. Refrigerate for 12 to 48 hours.
 - The longer you ferment, the deeper the flavor. For subtle nutty notes, go for 12 hours; for rich tanginess, aim for 36–48 hours.

Step 5: Shape and Proof (2 hours)

1. Remove the dough from the fridge and let it sit at room temperature for 30 minutes.
2. Turn it onto a lightly floured surface, shape it into a boule (round) or batard (oval), and place it in a floured proofing basket.
3. Cover and let the dough proof for 1–2 hours or until it passes the “poke test.”
 - Poke your finger into the dough—if the indent springs back slightly, it’s ready!

Step 6: Bake (30–35 minutes)

1. Preheat your oven to 250°C (480°F) with a Dutch oven or baking stone inside for even heat distribution.
2. Place the dough on parchment paper, score the top with a sharp blade, and transfer it into the preheated Dutch oven.
3. Bake with the lid on for 20 minutes to trap steam, then uncover and bake for another 10–15 minutes until golden brown with a crackling crust.
4. Remove and cool on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes before slicing.

Chef’s Tips for Success

- **Hydration Level:** If you're feeling adventurous, adjust the water to 375ml for a more open crumb but slightly challenging dough handling.
- **Flavor Boost:** Add roasted garlic, caramelized onions, or fresh herbs during the initial mix for a gourmet twist.
- **Storage:** Wrap the cooled bread in a linen towel to maintain its crust or slice and freeze it for later use.

Serving Suggestions

- **Breakfast:** Spread with European-style butter and a sprinkle of flaky salt.
- **Lunch:** Pair with aged cheese and honey for a perfect charcuterie plate.
- **Dinner:** Use it as a base for bruschetta with fresh tomatoes, basil, and balsamic reduction