

Sourdough Baguettes

Ingredients:

- 350 g water (1 ½ cups)
- 100-130 g active starter (½ cup) * **[see note]**
- 465 g bread flour (3 ¾ cups)
- 10 g salt (1 ½ tsp)

Directions:

- 1) **Mix** all the ingredients together. Cover the dough with a lid, damp towel, or plastic cling wrap and let it rest for 30 minutes.
- 2) **Strengthen the dough:** Thirty minutes after mixing, begin four sets of folds, spaced thirty minutes apart. I like to perform two sets of stretch and folds followed by two sets of coil folds, but you can do all stretch and folds or all coil folds if you prefer.
 - To stretch and fold the dough: Pull the dough up as far as it will go without tearing and then fold it completely over to the other side. Perform one fold in each cardinal direction before covering the dough and allowing it to rest once more.
 - To coil fold the dough: Pull the dough up from the middle, stretching up as far as it will go. Then, fold the dough under itself in each cardinal direction before covering the dough and allowing it to rest once more.
- 3) **Bulk fermentation:** After folds are complete, allow the dough to rest until it has increased in volume by at least 50% (or up to 100%) and is showing nice bubbles on top. At this point, you can refrigerate the dough or shape it right away.
- 4) **Preshape:** Divide the dough into three equal sections, about 315 g each. Preshape each section into a round. To do this, pull the dough toward you, using your pinkies to tuck the dough under itself and tighten the surface. Repeat until a nice, gentle round is formed. Rest 30 minutes.
- 5) **Shape** the dough into a baguette. To do this, fold the top and bottom of the dough toward the middle, gently pressing the dough to seal. Next, fold the dough in half two times. Use your thumb to mark the middle and the heel of your palm to help you seal the dough. Pinch any seams closed. Last, very gently roll the dough out to elongate and complete the baguette shape. Transfer each baguette to a couche or large kitchen towel lightly dusted with rice flour (to prevent sticking). Fold the material up between each baguette and on the ends to help your baguettes hold their elongated shape. Rest 1-2 more hours. * **[see note]**
- 6) While the baguettes are resting, place a baking stone on the top oven rack. Preheat your oven to 500 F for one hour before baking the baguettes. (A baking sheet will also work fine, but does not have to be preheated).

- 7) When your dough is ready to bake, boil some water in a tea kettle or on the stovetop. Add to an oven-safe, water-safe loaf pan and place on the rack below the baking stone.
- 8) Transfer the baguettes from the couche to a piece of parchment paper. Score the baguettes 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep, then transfer to the preheated baking stone.
- 9) **Bake** the baguettes at 450 F for 20 minutes with the steam. Optionally, add four to five ice cubes to the bottom of the oven as soon as baking starts for an additional steam blast.
- 10) After 20 minutes, remove the pan of water and continue baking 15-20 minutes more, until the baguettes are a deep golden and the outside has crisped nicely.
- 11) Cool the baguettes for at least 30 minutes before slicing.
- 12) **Enjoy!**
- 13) **How to store:** Store in a Ziploc bag on the counter for three to five days, or slice and store in the freezer.

To reheat: From room temperature, toast 2-3 minutes. From frozen, toast 4-5 minutes. I do this in my air fryer at 400 F.

Notes:

Sourdough Starter: I usually use 130 g of starter for this recipe and reduce my fermentation time from my usual. You can reduce the amount of starter to 100 g if you prefer.

Final proof: The dough must be at room temperature before entering the hot oven. A cold dough won't get the proper oven spring and, therefore, will not produce an open crumb.