

Bacon Cheddar Jalapeño Sourdough Braid

Pre-prepped ingredients:

- 12-16 slices bacon, fried crispy and crumbled
- 2 jalapeños, diced
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

Main dough:

- 520 g bread flour (4 $\frac{1}{8}$ cups)
- 240 g water (1 cup)
- 80 g milk ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup)
- 10 g salt (2 tsp)
- 150 g active starter ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)

Egg wash:

- 1 whole egg
- 1 tbsp water

Directions:

- 1) **Prep** bacon, jalapeños, and cheddar cheese. Set aside.
- 2) **Mix** together flour, salt, water, milk, and active starter until a shaggy dough forms.
- 3) Turn the dough out onto a counter and **knead** until the dough comes completely together, about two minutes.
- 4) Make a well in the center and add the bacon; knead until it is incorporated.
- 5) *Repeat with half the cheese, the other half of the cheese, and lastly the jalapeño. NOTE: The dough will begin to feel dry during this process. Keep kneading until the dough is sticky once more. This took me about twenty-five minutes total. Alternatively, knead using a stand mixer set to a low speed.*
- 6) **Bulk ferment:** Allow the dough to rise until it has doubled in size (7-8 hours in a proofer set to 80 F or overnight on the counter).
- 7) **Shape:** Divide the dough into three even sections.
- 8) Roll out each section into a 12 inch long rope. Place the strands side-by-side on a piece of parchment paper or silicone baking mat.
- 9) Connect the tops of the strands, then braid. Tuck the ends under the loaf.

- 10) **Final proof:** *Let rest again until puffy (2-4 more hours on the counter).*
- 11) Preheat oven to 425 F.
- 12) **Make the egg wash:** Whisk one whole egg + one tbsp water until smooth.
- 13) Brush the egg wash all over the loaf.
- 14) **Bake** on preheated pizza stone or 9X13 baking sheet for 30-35 minutes, until the internal temperature reaches at least 190 F.
- 15) **Enjoy!**
- 16) **How to store:** Store on the counter for three days or slice and store in the freezer.

To reheat: Toast until warmed through.