

## Sourdough Bagels

### Sweet Stiff Starter:

- 40 g water (3 *tbsp*)
- 40 g active starter (3 *tbsp*)
- 80 g all-purpose flour ( $\frac{2}{3}$  *cup*)
- 10 g white sugar (2 *tbsp*)

### Dough:

- 300 g water (1  $\frac{1}{4}$  *cup*)
- 50 g barley malt syrup, honey, or molasses ( $\frac{1}{4}$  *cup*)
- All of the sweet stiff starter
- 500 g bread flour (4 *cups*; I use *King Arthur*)
- 20 g vital wheat gluten (2 *tbsp*)
- 10 g salt (1  $\frac{1}{2}$  *tsp*)

### Water Bath:

- 4 qt pot filled about halfway with water, set over the stovetop to boil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup barley malt, honey, or molasses

### Optional:

- Toppings of choice: poppy seeds, sesame seeds, dried minced onion, cinnamon sugar

### Directions:

- 1) **Make the sweet stiff starter.** Mix together all ingredients for the sweet stiff starter 8-12 hours before you plan to make the dough. Knead for 2-3 minutes to incorporate, using lightly wet hands as needed. Cover and rest at room temperature.
- 2) **Mix the dough.** To the bowl of a stand mixer, add all ingredients for the dough. Roughly mix, then transfer to your stand mixer. Alternatively, this dough can be kneaded by hand.
- 3) **Knead the dough.**
  - *KitchenAid:* Using the dough hook attachment, knead on a low speed (speed 2) for 10-15 minutes, until the dough is smooth and springs back when poked.
  - *Ankarsrum:* Using the dough roller and scraper attachments, set the mixer to "ON" and let it run on speed 3 until the dough comes together. Adjust the roller so that it works the dough against the side of the bowl and use a spoon, as necessary, to help the dough along. After the dough comes together, set the timer for twelve minutes and let the Ankarsrum do its work.

- *By hand*: Turn the dough out onto a clean counter and use the “bench kneading” method to knead the dough for about 15 minutes.
- 4) **Bulk ferment the dough.** Remove the dough from your stand mixer and knead by hand for 1-2 minutes to form a smooth round. Transfer to a 2 qt bowl or proofing container. Cover with a lid or plastic cling wrap. Rest until the dough doubles in size (or completely fills the 2 qt container). This takes 8-10 hours at 70 F (21 C).
  - 5) **Divide and pre-shape.** Divide the dough into eight sections, 125-130 g each. Pre-shape each section into a round by tucking all the ends underneath and pinching the seams on the bottom closed. Rest for 20 minutes. (This short rest gives the gluten a chance to relax so that it will stretch easier.)
  - 6) **Stretch/shape the bagels.** Poke a hole into the center of each ball of dough, then rotate and stretch the dough until the hole in the center is the size of your liking. For bagels with pronounced holes, you’ll want to stretch the dough very far, so the hole is about four inches in diameter, and divide the bagels between two sheet pans. If the dough will not stretch as far as you like, let it rest, then try again in another 20 minutes.
  - 7) **Proof the dough.** After the bagels are shaped, cover them and proof for 1-3 more hours, until they are very puffy and airy.
  - 8) **Prepare a work station.** You’ll need a 4 qt pot filled halfway with water (set to boil on the stovetop), 1/4 cup of barley malt syrup, a skimmer, a wire rack over a baking sheet for draining, and possibly a new sheet pan for the boiled bagels.
  - 9) **Boil the bagels.** To the boiling water, add ¼ cup of barley malt syrup. (You could also use honey or molasses.) Once the sugar is dissolved, add 2-3 bagels to the pot. If the bagels were proofed correctly, they should float immediately. Boil for 40-60 seconds per side, or up to two minutes for the chewiest bagels. Repeat for all the bagels.
  - 10) **Drain and top the bagels.** Remove the bagels from the water bath and set over a wire rack to drain. Optionally, dip/coat the bagels in toppings of your choice.
  - 11) **Bake the bagels.** Transfer the bagels back onto a sheet pan and bake at 425 F (220 C) for 25 minutes.
  - 12) **Cool and enjoy!** Transfer the bagels to a wire rack to cool for 15-20 minutes before slicing.
  - 13) **How to store:** Bagels are best enjoyed fresh, but can be stored in a sealed bag on the counter for up to seven days, or sliced and stored in the freezer for several months.

**To reheat:** Slice and toast until warmed through.

Notes:

- I do not recommend a cold ferment for this dough. If you must, place the dough in the fridge when the dough hits about 75% size increase, or directly after shaping. Make sure the dough is at room temperature before boiling.