

Sourdough Bialy

For the dough:

- 250 g water
- 75 g active starter
- 360 g bread flour (*I use King Arthur Bread Flour*)
- 7 g salt

For the filling:

- 1 small onion
- 1 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 tbsp breadcrumbs
- ½ tsp salt

Other ingredients:

- Cornmeal, for dusting
- Poppy seeds, for sprinkling

Directions:

- 1) **Mix** and knead all ingredients for the dough (water, starter, flour, and salt) for 5 minutes. The flour should be completely incorporated and gluten development should be initiated. Cover the dough and rest for 30 minutes.
- 2) **Strengthen** the dough.
 - **Knead the dough for 3-5 minutes.** Set a timer and stop kneading when the timer is up. It is not essential to develop the dough completely, as this recipe uses a hybrid method (kneading/folds) to develop the gluten, meaning we will finish developing the gluten through folds. You can use any method of kneading here that you feel comfortable with - bowl folds, bench kneading, slap-and-folds, or Rubaud mixing. Cover and let the dough rest for 30 minutes before beginning stretch-and-folds. The dough should have formed a windowpane after this rest period, before stretch-and-folds begin.
 - **Stretch-and-fold the dough (3-4 sets).** Using two hands, stretch the dough up as far as it will go without tearing, then fold it all the way over to the other side. Repeat at least once in each cardinal direction, or until the dough will not stretch anymore (4-8 folds). Cover and let the dough rest for 30 minutes before doing another set of stretch and folds. Perform three to four sets of folds in total, until the dough does not stretch anymore.

- 3) **Bulk ferment** the dough. Let the dough rest until it has doubled in size, 10-11 hours at 70 F.
- 4) Heavily dust a half-size sheet pan with cornmeal.
- 5) **Shape** the dough. Divide the dough into eight pieces, 80-85g each. Shape each piece 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, tight round is formed.
- 6) Transfer each round onto the cornmeal-laden sheet pan, coating the entire outside (top, bottom, and sides) of the dough with cornmeal.
- 7) **Final proof.** Let the dough proof again until noticeably puffy and almost doubled once more, 2-4 hours at 70 F.
- 8) Preheat an oven to 500 F for at least one hour before baking the bialy.
- 9) **Make the onion filling.** Dice one small onion and cook over the stovetop with 1 tbsp cooking oil on medium to medium-high heat until cooked to your desired doneness (soft, caramelized, or anywhere in between). Stir in breadcrumbs (to absorb moisture) and season with salt. Set aside.
- 10) **Final shape.** When the oven is finished preheating, the bialy are finished proofing, and the onion filling has been made, prepare the bialy for the oven. Take each round and, working from the middle, rotate and stretch the dough to expand the round, allowing gravity to pull the dough downward. We want the outer edges to be like a bagel, but we want to keep a thin sheet of dough in the center (no hole). Transfer to parchment paper (to be transferred to a baking stone, or a baking sheet lined with parchment paper if you do not have a baking stone). Use your fingers to make an indentation defining the center of the bialy, then firmly press down in the center to remove any extra air. If the center is not thin enough, it will pop up in the hot oven (like pita bread) and will spill onion everywhere.
- 11) Fill the center of each bialy with 1 tbsp of the onion filling. Then, sprinkle the tops all over with poppy seeds.
- 12) Optionally, spray the tops of the bialy with water (this helps them expand properly in my gas oven).
- 13) **Bake** at 500 F for 15-18 minutes, with steam for the first 10 minutes (as the dough is expanding). You can use any preferred method of steam that works for your home oven (boiling water, ice, lava rocks, etc.). Be sure to remove the steam after 10 minutes so the bialy can brown properly.
- 14) Cool for 15-20 minutes, then enjoy fresh. These are excellent made into sandwiches or lathered with cream cheese.

15) **How to store:** These are best eaten fresh. If you must store, store at room temperature up to three days.

To reheat: Toast in an air fryer or reheat in your home oven until warmed through and crisped to your liking.

Notes:

- If you want to use the refrigerator to expand the baking timeline, you can do so at the end of bulk fermentation (before the final proof). You will need to make the final proof longer if you choose to do this (6-8 hours at 70 F) to accommodate the cold dough.
- You can fill bialy with anything your heart desires, it does not have to be this onion filling. I chose this filling because it is traditional to this bread, but bialy can be incredibly versatile.
- Use any extra filling to make a dip! Mix the extra cooked onions into a small tub of whipped cream cheese and serve with seeded crackers.