

SOURDOUGH BREAD

FOR NATIONAL GRILLED CHEESE DAY

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup ripe (fed) sourdough starter
[\[Find Starter Recipe Here\]](#)
- 1 ½ cups lukewarm water
- 1 to 2 teaspoons instant yeast*
- 2 ½ teaspoons salt
- 5 cups Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
- *Use just 1 teaspoon yeast if your starter is strong and vigorous; up to 2 teaspoons if it seems a bit poky.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Mix everything together and then knead to make a soft, smooth dough. It may be soft and slightly sticky, but you should be able to round it into a ball.
2. Allow the dough to rise, in a lightly greased, covered bowl or other covered container, until it's doubled in size, about 90 minutes. If you're using a bread machine, simply let the machine complete its dough cycle. Since conditions can vary so much (warm vs. cool kitchen, a dough that's slightly stiff vs. slightly slack), go by how the dough looks rather than your kitchen timer. If it's doubled after an hour, proceed. If it takes 2 hours, be patient and let it happen.
3. Gently divide the dough in half; it'll deflate somewhat.
4. Shape the dough into two oval loaves; or, for longer loaves, two 10" to 11" logs. Place the loaves on a lightly greased or parchment-lined baking sheet.
5. Cover the loaves and let them rise until quite puffy, about 1 hour. Towards the end of the rising time, preheat the oven to 425°F.
6. Spray the loaves with lukewarm water. This will keep their crust soft and flexible longer in the oven, allowing them to rise as high as possible in the oven. For an artisan look, sift a thin layer of flour atop the loaves.
7. Make two or three fairly deep diagonal slashes in each loaf; if you have a lame, use it. If not, a serrated bread knife or sharp chef's knife, wielded firmly, will work well. These slashes allow the bread to expand quickly in the oven without tearing along the sides.
8. Bake the bread for 25 to 30 minutes, until it's golden brown and its internal temperature is about 200°F on a digital thermometer.
9. Remove the bread from the oven and cool it on a rack. Store the bread for a few days at room temperature, wrapped loosely in plastic; freeze for longer storage.