



Base Recipe: Daily Bread

Daily bread doesn't mean the same thing to everyone — it doesn't have to. It can be anything from a dense rye to a soft flatbread to crusty white rolls. Just as every table has its daily bread, every baker has theirs — a good, foundational loaf. A daily bread is rarely the fussiest loaf, nor the most creative, but it's a good place to start. This particular loaf is pretty honest — humble enough that it won't overpower a good meal yet elegant enough to provide good texture and chew. It's something you'll want to eat hot from the oven or toasted and slathered with butter five days later. Based on the classic country loaves made by rural French bakers, this sourdough style rose to prominence in the last two decades in large part thanks to San Francisco's Tartine Bakery and has since made a large-scale return to bakeries both in Europe and around the world.

These days, it can feel like you'll find the same loaf in Paris, as you'll find in Copenhagen, as you'll find in Berlin, and some complain that this bread and its ilk represent little more than a trendy monoculture. But that's wrong. People have made bread like this for hundreds of years; its process and proportions are rooted in tradition. Even if bakers vary their methods — some incorporate salt at different stages, some add an autolyse or hold back water, while others prefer a stiff leaven — these are minor tweaks. No one is reinventing the wheel. There are no secret ingredients — just one's own hands and flour. These are just tried and true methods passed down through the years. But in a world of seeming sameness, take comfort in the fact that the sameness is often superficial. Good bakers differentiate and give their bread a sense of place with locally grown and milled flours, as well as by using their own hands, their unique touch and specific gestures. Remember this as you make your own.

This daily bread recipe keeps it simple and uses light stone-ground wheat bread flour with whole wheat flour added through the leaven. The incorporation of rough sel de Guérande, large grain French gray sea salt, naturally adds minerals, but this is optional and you can use whatever salt you have on hand, just be sure to measure any substitutions by weight, not volume

Use this recipe and its method as an outline for the other wheat loaves in the book. Once you're comfortable, swap out some of the light stone-ground wheat bread flour for spelt flour, which tends to be a bit more extensible. Then get creative, mixing in seeds and porridges — any hydrated whole grain, such as oats, rye, or spelt. The recipes that follow this base will give you some ideas, but the more you play around, the more you'll understand.

Base Recipe: Daily Bread

Note: The process of making this loaf, from leaven to bake, is 24 hours, so always build your leaven with that in mind — that is, start 24 hours before your ideal bake time. The leaven takes 8–9 hours to ripen before you can use it to mix your dough, which is perfect timing for it to sit overnight or for the duration of a workday.

To summarize: If you want to do an evening bake, build your leaven the previous evening. For a morning bake, build your leaven in the morning. The relatively low percentage of starter in the leaven slows its maturation, so that you wake up to a creamy, ripe starter, and not one that's super acidic and over-fermented. The speed at which your leaven ripens is something you can actually control. How? If you want to buy yourself time and sleep in an extra 2–3 hours, cut down the percentage of starter in the leaven by half.

YIELD: 1 LOAF

For the whole wheat leaven

- 10g (1 tbsp plus 1 tsp) ripe sourdough starter
- 60g (½ cup) whole wheat flour
- 60g (¼ cup) cool water

For the dough

- 9g (2 tsp) large grain gray sea salt (sel de Guérande) 19%
- 385g (1½ cups plus 1 tbsp plus 1 tsp) lukewarm water (28–35°C / 84–95°F) 77%
- 500g (4 cups plus 2½ tbsp) light stone-ground wheat bread flour 100%
- 100g (½ cup plus 2 tbsp) whole wheat leaven 20%

L TIMELINE

24 h, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8–9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 4 h

Preshape, bench rest 20 min

Shape, basket rest 30 min

Refrigerate 8–15 h

Day 2, Morning:

Bake 45 min

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

A - Build your leaven: Hand mix the ripe starter, whole wheat flour, and cool water until smooth and homogenous to build your leaven, then let it rest, loosely covered, for 8–9 hours (or as long as the individual recipe requires).

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8–9 hours later): Start making your dough

B - Check your leaven for readiness: It should have doubled in size and have a domed top. It will float in water and smell creamy and ripe, not acidic.

C - Mix your dough: If your leaven is ready, in a large bowl, mix the salt with the lukewarm water until dissolved. Add the light stone-ground wheat bread flour and leaven and mix by hand until there are no dry bits of flour. Cover with a damp towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

D - Stretch and fold your dough: After 30 minutes, wet your hands and a dough scraper to prevent sticking. Use the dough scraper to release the dough from the bowl, then stretch and fold your dough over itself until it resists any more stretching. This can be done in the bowl or on a damp work surface (p. 18).

E - Bulk proof your dough: Cover and rest, repeating the stretches and folds at 30-minute intervals for the next 3½ hours, for a total of 4 hours (or as long as the individual recipe requires). After each subsequent rest, you'll notice your dough needs fewer and fewer stretches and folds to resist and form a nice smooth ball. As the dough gets tighter, it's nice to lift it 2-handed from the middle to let gravity stretch it downward, then turn and repeat until it forms a smooth ball. At the end of the final rest, don't fold the dough. By now, the dough should be light and puffy — very different from how it started. If you're unsure whether it's ready, pull off a small piece and see if it floats in water — just like you do to check the starter. *Note: If your dough isn't floating, this could result from a cold room or an underactive starter — give it another 30 minutes to bulk proof (rest). Remember that the opposite is also possible, and your dough may need to be shaped earlier, at the 3½ hour mark prior to folding.*

F - Preshape your dough: After the final rest, turn the dough out onto a floured work surface. Stretch opposing sides outward in opposite directions then fold these into the middle, overlapping each side like an envelope. Continue stretching and overlapping the sides all the way down the length of the dough. Fold all this over itself, and leave to relax, smooth-side up, for 20 minutes before the final shape. This rest is called the bench rest.

G - Shape your dough: After 20 minutes, use your bench knife to flip the preshaped dough so that it is smooth side down. Stretch opposing sides outward in opposite directions, then fold these into the middle, overlapping each side like an envelope. Fold all along this seam so it looks “stitched.” Fold the top over about two-thirds of the way and press, then fold what is now the top all the way down to meet the bottom. Press to seal. Quickly scoop up the shaped loaf and put it, smooth-side down, in a floured proofing basket.

H - Basket rest your dough: Let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes, then refrigerate overnight or for up to 15 hours for the final rest. Be sure your refrigerator temperature is between 4-6°C (40-43°F) to prevent over-fermentation.

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

I - Preheat your oven: Preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F), along with your cast-iron pot or pizza stone or steel (pp. 22-23). Remember: A pizza stone or steel will need at least an extra 30 minutes to heat once the oven reaches temperature and you’ll need to use a muffin tin or rimmed baking pan and ice to create steam.

J - Score your loaf: Once the oven is preheated, invert your loaf straight from its basket into the middle of the heated pot or stone. The smooth side of the loaf is now up. Use a sharp serrated knife or a baker’s lame to score the dough (p. 22), then immediately cover the pot, if using cast iron, or toss in ice cubes if using a pizza stone or steel.

K - Bake your bread: Bake for 20 minutes, then remove the cover, lower the oven temperature to 235°C (450°F), and continue baking for another 25 minutes, or until you hear a hollow sound when you knock on the bottom of the loaf.

Malted Oat Loaf

This is a cozy bread. Both barley malt and soaked oats add a touch of warmth and beery sweetness. Malts are natural flavor boosters made from sprouted grains that have been dried and turned into powder. They're nutty and sweet and result in deeply caramelized crusts. Serve with butter and jam or as a hearty sandwich base.

Note: There are two kinds of malt, diastatic and non-diastatic. Diastatic malt is an active malt, which means it accelerates yeast activity; it's used as a dough additive. That's not the malt we want to use here. Non-diastatic malt — the kind used here — is a natural grain-based flavoring agent. You can find it at brewing supply stores or organic groceries.

YIELD: 1 LOAF

Follow the pattern of the *Daily Bread* recipe (pp. 26-27).

For the whole wheat leaven

- 10g (2 tsp) ripe sourdough starter
- 60g (½ cup) whole wheat flour
- 60g (¼ cup) cool water

For the porridge

- 50g (heaping ½ cup) old-fashioned oats 10%
- 100g (⅓ cup plus 1 tbsp plus 2 tsp) warm water 20%

For the dough

- 9g (2 tsp) large grain gray sea salt (sel de Guérande) 1.9%
- 350g (1½ cups plus 2 tsp) lukewarm water (28-35°C (84-95°F)) 70%
- 500g (4 cups plus 2½ tbsp) light stone-ground wheat flour 100%
- 10g (1 heaping tbsp) non-diastatic barley malt powder 2%
- 100g (½ cup plus 2 tbsp) whole wheat leaven 20%

For the crust

- 100g (heaping 1 cup) whole oats

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

Build your leaven and let it rest, loosely covered, for 8-9 hours (p. 26, A).

Meanwhile, prepare the porridge: Mix the 50g (heaping ½ cup) of oats and the warm water in a small bowl, cover, and let soak for 8-9 hours.

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8-9 hours later): Start making your dough

If your leaven is ready (p. 26, B), in a large bowl, mix the salt with the lukewarm water until dissolved. Add the light stone-ground wheat bread flour, malt, and leaven and mix by hand until there are no dry bits of flour. Cover with a damp towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, add the porridge to the dough and mix in by hand. Give the dough a set of stretches and folds until it resists any more stretching (p. 26, D). Cover and repeat the stretches and folds at 30-minute intervals for the next 3 hours, until the dough is light and airy and requires fewer and fewer folds to hold the tension (p. 26, E).

After the final rest, turn the proofed dough out onto a floured work surface and give it a preshape (p. 27, F). Let rest for 20-30 minutes.

Meanwhile, spread the 100g (heaping 1 cup) of oats on a large plate. Have a proofing basket waiting.

After 20-30 minutes, shape your dough: With wet hands, lightly dampen the surface of the dough, then use a bench knife to flip the dough onto the plate of oats. Fold and shape the dough (p. 27, G) on the plate — the oats will stick to the surface of the dough. Set the shaped loaf, smooth-side down, in the proofing basket and let rest at room temperature for 20 minutes, then refrigerate overnight or for up to 15 hours for the final rest (p. 27, H).

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

Place a covered cast-iron pot in the oven and preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F).

Once the oven is preheated, invert your loaf from its basket into the heated pot, smooth-side up. Score the dough (p. 27, J), then cover and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover the bread, lower the oven temperature to 235°C (450°F), and continue baking for 25 minutes, or until you hear a hollow sound when you knock on the bottom of the loaf. Because of the added moisture of the oat porridge, be sure to let this loaf properly cool before cutting.

L TIMELINE

24 hours, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8-9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 3½ h

Preshape, bench rest 20-30 min

Shape, basket rest 20 min

Refrigerate 8-15 h

Day 2, Morning:

Bake 45 min



Kasha Loaf

This one's for Frank Costanza. Buckwheat, or kasha, has a strong and earthy flavor — if you know, you know — and has been an important part of European diets since it showed up from Central Asia more than 4,000 years ago. In Northwestern France, it's ground into a gray flour and used to make savory crêpes called galettes, while in Eastern Europe, it's boiled with salt and stuffed in cabbage and dumplings. In Jewish homes, it's cooked with fried onions and bowtie pasta for kasha varnishkes. You can try, but you won't escape kasha. This bread can't either. It doubles down on buckwheat — flakes and flour — but if that isn't enough for you, add fried onions and cooked kasha on the final turn.

YIELD: 1 LOAF

For the whole wheat leaven

- 10g (2 tsp) ripe sourdough starter
- 60g (½ cup) whole wheat flour
- 60g (¼ cup) cool water

For the dough

- 9g (2 tsp) large grain gray sea salt (sel de Guérande) 1.9%
- 350g (1 ½ cups plus 2 tbsp) lukewarm water (28–35°C (84–95°F)) 70%
- 475g (4 cups) light stone-ground wheat bread flour 95%
- 25g (3 tbsp plus 1 tsp) dark buckwheat flour 5%
- 100g (½ cup plus 2 tbsp) whole wheat leaven 20%
- 30g (¼ cup) cooked buckwheat (optional)
- 1 yellow onion, finely diced and sautéed until golden brown (optional)

For the crust

- 100g (1 cup) buckwheat flakes (milled buckwheat groats)

L TIMELINE

24 h, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8–9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 4

Preshape, bench rest 20 min

Shape, basket rest 20–30 min

Refrigerate 8–15 h

Day 2, Morning:

Bake 45 min

Follow the pattern of the *Daily Bread* recipe (pp. 26–27).

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

Build your leaven and let it rest, loosely covered, for 8–9 hours (p. 26, A).

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8–9 hours later): Start making your dough

If your leaven is ready (p. 26, B), in a large bowl, mix the salt with the lukewarm water until dissolved. Add the light stone-ground wheat bread flour, dark buckwheat flour, and leaven and mix by hand until there are no dry bits of flour. Cover with a damp towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, give the dough a set of stretches and folds until it resists any more stretching (p. 26, D). Cover and repeat the stretches and folds at 30-minute intervals for the next 3 ½ hours until the dough is light and airy and requires fewer folds to hold the tension (p. 26, E). *Note: At the 3-hour mark, you have the option to add kasha and onions with the final set of stretches and folds. If not adding extras, stretch and fold as usual.*

After the final rest, turn the proofed dough out onto a floured work surface and give it a preshape (p. 27, F). Let rest for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, spread the buckwheat flakes on a large plate. Have a proofing basket waiting.

After 20 minutes, lightly dampen the top of your dough with a wet hand (to help the flakes stick) then use a wet bench knife to flip the dough onto the plate of buckwheat flakes. Fold and shape the dough (p. 27, G) on the plate — the buckwheat flakes will stick to the surface of the dough. Set the shaped loaf, smooth-side down, in the proofing basket and let rest at room temperature for 20–30 minutes, then refrigerate overnight or up to 15 hours for the final rest.

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

Place a covered cast-iron pot in the oven and preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F).

Once the oven is preheated, invert your loaf from its basket into the heated pot, smooth-side up. Score the dough (p. 27, J) then cover and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover the bread, lower the oven temperature to 235°C (450°F), and continue baking for 25 minutes, or until you hear a hollow sound when you knock on the bottom of the loaf. Enjoy with fresh white cheese and sharp radishes.





Seeded Plum Buns

There's a new classic baker's breakfast that leaked out of Denmark and into bakeries all over Europe — a salted butter-and-Comté sourdough bun. It's simple perfection. These nutty little buns, which get just a dash of sour sweetness from soft chopped prunes, go perfectly with the salty Comté and butter. They're some of the only breads you shouldn't bother to cool before eating. Serve them fresh from the oven for your own baker's breakfast.

YIELD: 8-12 BUNS

For the whole wheat leaven

- 10g (2 tsp) ripe sourdough starter
- 60g (½ cup) whole wheat flour
- 60g (¼ cup) cool water

For the seed mix

- 20g (3 tbsp) poppy seeds
- 20g (3 tbsp) flax seeds
- 20g (3 tbsp) pumpkin seeds
- 20g (3 tbsp) sunflower seeds (optional)
- 20g (3 tbsp) sesame seeds (optional)
- 60g (¼ cup) boiling water

For the dough

- 9g (2 tsp) large grain gray sea salt (sel de Guérande) 1.9%
- 370g (1½ cups plus 2 tsp) lukewarm water at 28–35°C (84–95°F) 74%
- 500g (4 cups plus 2½ tbsp) light stone-ground wheat bread flour or light spelt flour 100%
- 100g (½ cup plus 2 tbsp) whole wheat leaven 20%
- 50g (⅓ cup) chopped prunes 10%

For the coating

- 100g (¾ cup) poppy seeds
- 100g (¾ cup) flax seeds
- 100g (¾ cup) pumpkin seeds

L TIMELINE

24 h, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8–9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 4 h

Preshape, bench rest 20 min

Shape, basket rest 20–30 min

Refrigerate 8–15 h

Day 2, Morning:

Bake 30 minutes

Follow the pattern of the Daily Bread recipe (pp. 26–27).

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

Build your leaven and let it rest, loosely covered, for 8–9 hours (p. 26, A).

Meanwhile, prepare the seed mix: Mix the poppy, flax, and pumpkin seeds with the boiling water in a small bowl, cover, and let soak for 8–9 hours. Drain before using.

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8–9 hours later): Start making your dough

If your leaven is ready (p. 26, B), in a large bowl, mix the salt with the lukewarm water until dissolved. Add the light stone-ground wheat bread flour and leaven and mix by hand until there are no dry bits of flour. Cover with a damp towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, add the drained seeds and chopped prunes and give the dough a set of stretches and folds (p. 26, D) to incorporate. Cover and repeat the stretches and folds at 30-minute intervals for the next 3½ hours, until the dough is light and airy and requires fewer and fewer folds to hold the tension (p. 26, E).

After the final rest, turn the dough out onto a wet work surface and divide it into two even portions. Using wet hands, preshape both portions (p. 27, F) then let rest for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, spread the poppy, flax, and pumpkin seeds for coating on a large plate. Have 2 proofing baskets waiting.

After 20 minutes, shape your dough: Use a wet bench knife to flip one portion of dough onto the plate of seeds. With wet hands, fold and shape the dough (p. 27, G) on the plate — the seeds will stick to the surface of the dough. Repeat with the second portion of dough. Place the shaped loaves, seam-side up, into the proofing baskets and let rest at room temperature for 20–30 minutes, then refrigerate overnight or for up to 15 hours for the final rest.

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

Place a covered cast-iron pot in the oven and preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F).

Once the oven is preheated, remove 1 shaped loaf from the refrigerator and invert it into the pot. Using your bench knife, press straight into the loaf to divide it into 4–6 even triangular portions and gently separate them. If this is too much maneuvering, cut the buns on a cutting board and place them in the pot afterward. Cover the pot and bake for 15 minutes, then uncover the pot, lower the oven temperature to 235°C (450°F) and continue baking for about 12 minutes, or until brown and crusty. Repeat for the second loaf.

Soft Whole Wheat Bread

Whole wheat bread has a reputation as a health food and not as a flavor bomb, but that is a disservice to the genre. Pain Complet, whole wheat bread, is in every French baker's repertoire and is a rich alternative to the ubiquitous baguette. Here, the addition of a small amount of butter softens the crumb of this classic loaf and smells smotheringly delicious as it bakes. While fats are usually left out of bread and reserved for soft, enriched doughs like brioche, their tenderizing effect can work wonders on rougher whole-grain loaves. If you want to keep this dairy free, substitute olive oil for the butter.

YIELD: 1 LOAF

For the whole wheat leaven

- 10g (2 tsp) ripe sourdough starter
- 60g (½ cup) whole wheat flour
- 60g (¼ cup) cool water

For the dough

- 9g (2 tsp) large grain gray sea salt (sel de Guérande) 1.9%
 - 400g (1 ¾ cups) lukewarm water at 28–35°C (84–95°F) 80%
 - 400g (3 ½ cups) whole wheat flour 80%
 - 100g (¾ cup plus 1 tbsp) light stone-ground wheat bread flour, light spelt flour, or bread flour 20%
 - 100g (½ cup plus 2 tbsp) leaven 20%
 - 50g (3 ½ tbsp) unsalted butter, room temperature 10%
- Optional: Substitute 35g (3 tbsp) olive oil for the butter 7%

L TIMELINE

24 h, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8–9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 4 h

Preshape, bench rest 20 min

Shape, basket rest 30 min

Refrigerate 8–15 h

Day 2, Morning:

Bake 45 min

Follow the pattern of the Daily Bread recipe (pp. 26–27).

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

Build your leaven and let it rest, loosely covered, for 8–9 hours (p. 26, A).

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8–9 hours later): Start making your dough

If your leaven is ready (p. 26, B), in a large bowl, mix the salt with the lukewarm water until dissolved. Add the whole wheat flour, light stone-ground wheat bread flour, and leaven and mix by hand until there are no dry bits of flour. If the dough feels pretty wet, don't worry — the whole wheat flour will absorb the water during the rest. Cover with a damp towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, give your dough a few stretches and folds until it resists any more stretching (p. 26, D). Gently schmear the butter into the dough, then continue to stretch and fold to incorporate the butter. If the dough tears, don't worry — it will come back together during the rest. Once the butter is fully incorporated, pick up the dough from the middle and let gravity fold it back on itself. Cover with a damp towel and let rest for 30 minutes. Cover and repeat the stretches and folds at 30-minute intervals for the next 3 ½ hours, until the dough is light and airy and requires fewer and fewer folds to hold the tension (p. 26, E).

After the final rest, turn the proofed dough out onto a floured surface and give it a preshape (p. 27, F). Let rest for 20 minutes. During the bench rest, lightly flour a proofing basket with whole wheat flour.

After 20 minutes, shape your dough: Use your bench knife to flip the dough, so it is smooth-side down on the work surface. Shape the dough (p. 27, G) and set it, smooth-side down, in the floured proofing basket. Let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes, then refrigerate overnight or for up to 15 hours for the final rest.

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

Place a covered cast-iron pot in the oven and preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F).

Once the oven is preheated, invert your loaf from its basket into the heated pot, smooth-side up. Score the dough (p. 27, J), then cover and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover the bread, lower the oven temperature to 235°C (450°F) and continue baking for 25 minutes, or until you hear a hollow sound when you knock on the bottom of the loaf.





Black Seed Potato Bread

The only European potato bread I've managed to find in the wild was in a bakery in Hungary, and I struggled so badly to make myself understood, it's a miracle I even got a hold of it. I might not have much luck finding them, but potato breads can allegedly be found all over Germany and Central Europe. Breads that incorporate potatoes have been around for centuries. In times of shortage, potatoes were an easy way to add bulk and longevity to bread, but this loaf is hardly the product of austerity — it's a show-off and demands that you treat it as such. Let it be the main event, not the sideshow. The potato gives the crumb loads of satisfying softness, while the seeds add onion-y bursts and crunch. It needs nothing more than some good olive oil and a touch of flaky salt for it to be a dinner course all its own.

YIELD: 1 LOAF

For the whole wheat leaven

- 10g (2 tsp) ripe sourdough starter
- 60g (½ cup) whole wheat flour
- 60g (¼ cup) cool water

For the dough

- 8g (½ tbsp) large grain gray sea salt (sel de Guérande) 2%
- 300g (1¼ cups) lukewarm water at 28–35°C (84–95°F) 75%
- 400g (3 ½ cups) light stone-ground wheat bread flour 100%
- 80g (⅓ cup) whole wheat leaven 20%
- 140g (1 cup) boiled, mashed, and cooled new potatoes 35%
- 5g ½ tbsp nigella seeds 1.2%
- 5g (½ tbsp) poppy seeds 1.2%
- 5g (1 ½ tbsp) black sesame seeds 1.2%

L TIMELINE

24 h, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8–9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 4 h

Preshape, bench rest 20 min

Shape, basket rest 20 min

Refrigerate 8–15 h

Day 2, Morning:

Bake 45 minutes

Follow the pattern of the Daily Bread recipe (pp. 26–27).

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

Build your leaven and let it rest, loosely covered, for 8–9 hours (p. 26, A).

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8–9 hours later): Start making your dough

If your leaven is ready (p. 26, B), in a large bowl, mix the salt with the lukewarm water until dissolved. Add the light stone-ground wheat bread flour and leaven and mix by hand until there are no dry bits of flour. Cover with a damp towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, give the dough a set of stretches and folds until it resists any more stretching (p. 26, D). Rest for 30 minutes, then add the mashed potatoes, along with the nigella, poppy, and black sesame seeds, and give the dough a set of stretches and folds to incorporate. Cover and repeat the stretches and folds at 30-minute intervals for the next 3 hours until the dough is light and airy and requires fewer and fewer folds to hold the tension (p. 26, E).

After the final rest, turn the proofed dough out onto a floured work surface and give it a preshape (p. 27, F). Let rest for 20 minutes. During the bench rest, lightly flour a proofing basket.

After 20 minutes, use a bench scraper to flip the dough so it's smooth-side down on the floured work surface. Shape the bread (p. 27, G) then place, smooth-side down, in the floured proofing basket. Let rest at room temperature for 20 minutes. then refrigerate overnight or for up to 15 hours for the final rest.

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

Place a covered cast-iron pot in the oven and preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F).

Once the oven is preheated, invert your loaf from its basket into the heated pot, smooth-side up. Score the dough (p. 27, J), then cover and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover the bread, lower the oven temperature to 235°F (450°F), and continue baking for 25 minutes, or until you hear a hollow sound when you knock on the bottom of the loaf. Allow the bread to cool before slicing.

Bialys

Spoiler alert: You won't find a bialy in Bialystock, the onion roll's namesake city — I made that drive so you don't have to. While the bialy was always more localized than its cousin, the bagel, it was almost entirely wiped out in Europe, along with the Jewish bakers who made them, and survives only in exile in pockets of East Coast America. While the flatter pletzel and more brioche-like cebularz are alive and well in Poland and the Marais in Paris, only now are bialys reappearing in Europe — though there's still no sign of them in Bialystock — thanks to a new generation of primarily Jewish-American bakers. Even if the bialy's European return is a slow one — as niche as its origins — let's call it a trend. After all, they are stand-alone breads that occupy the same snack realm as focaccia, the same brunch realm as bagels, and the same place in one's heart as grandparents and chicken soup.

YIELD: 9 BIALYS

For the dough

- Ingredients for Daily Bread leaven and dough (p. 26)

For the filling

- 2 medium red onions
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp table salt
- 1 tsp coarse black pepper

L TIMELINE

24 h, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8–9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 4 h

Preshape, bench rest 20 min

Shape, refrigerate overnight, at least 9 h

Day 2, Morning:

Final proof 2–3 h

Shape, bake 15–20 min

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

Build your leaven and let it rest, loosely covered, for 8–9 hours (p. 26, A).

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8–9 hours later): Start making your dough

Follow the recipe for the Daily Bread, including bulk proofing (p. 26, B–E), so the dough is ready to be preshaped.

After the final rest of the bulk proof, give your dough a preshape: Turn the proofed dough out onto a floured work surface and divide it into 9 equal portions, about 84g (3 ounces) each. Gently flatten then fold up the sides of each piece of dough into the middle to give it tension. Flip these smooth-side up. Using a cupped hand, gently roll each portion of dough into a ball. Let rest, smooth-side up, for 20 minutes. During the bench rest, line a baking tray with parchment paper.

After 20 minutes, flip the preshaped balls, so they are smooth-side down. Gently flatten each ball with your palm, then repeat the process, folding the dough and shaping it into balls. Arrange the balls, 5cm (2 inches) apart, on the parchment paper-lined baking tray, lightly dust the tops with flour, and cover loosely. Refrigerate overnight, at least 9 hours.

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

Remove the bialys from the refrigerator and allow to rise and come to room temperature for 2–3 hours.

Meanwhile, prepare your filling: Cut the onions into very thin rounds, put in a large bowl, and toss with the olive oil, poppy seeds, salt, and pepper.

Preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F).

Once your bialys have warmed up, without lifting them off the tray, press the middle of each ball to create a depression that's about 5cm (2 inches) across. Each ball should have a roughly 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch) puffed edge, so that the bialys look like small pizzas with a fat crust. In the center of each bialy, spread a generous spoonful of the onion mixture. Bake for 15–20 minutes, or until toasty brown. Eat as is, or serve with butter, cream cheese, or smoked fish.



Roasted Garlic and Lemony Labne Bialys

Every single morning of the week, Ali Jalali, my best friend's father, loads an onion bagel with clouds of labne. It's an inspired Persia-meets-Shtetl breakfast and if the combo works for Mr. Jalali and his bagels, why not these bialys? Fresh labne, soft roasted garlic, and a lemony herb sauce make these bialys even dreamier than the original. You can use store-bought labne, but making your own is so easy and the bit of extra effort required is worth it. Time your bake to pull these bialys from the oven to serve hot for brunch or as an aperitif-hour nosh.



Note: I like to make the roasted garlic and the labne on day 1, but you can wait and roast the garlic on the day you bake your bialys. When making labne, don't worry about the lack of refrigeration — this is a European cookbook, after all. But in all seriousness, yogurt is a fermented product to begin with, and the salt and lemon will keep it safe until the next day.

YIELD: 9 BIALYS

For the dough

- Ingredients for Daily Bread leaven and dough (p. 26)

For the roasted garlic

- 3 garlic heads
- 65g (¼ cup plus 1 tbsp) olive oil, plus more for brushing

For the labne

- 500g (2 cups) Greek or other thick yogurt (3-5% fat)
- 1 garlic clove, crushed with a garlic press
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp fleur de sel

For the lemony herb sauce

- 10g (¼ cup) fresh dill
- 42g (1 cup) fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 20g (½ cup) fresh mint leaves
- 10g (¼ cup) fresh chives
- 5 sprigs fresh tarragon, leaves picked
- 1 tbsp fleur de sel or any flaky sea salt
- 65g (¼ cup plus 1 tbsp) olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced

L TIMELINE

24 h, start to finish

Day 1, Morning:

Build leaven, rest 8-9 h

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening:

Mix dough, bulk proof 4 h

Preshape, bench rest 20 min

Shape, refrigerate overnight, at least 9 h

Roast garlic / Make labne

Day 2, Morning:

Final proof, shape, bake 15-20 min

Make lemony herb sauce

Day 1, Morning: Make your leaven

Build your leaven and let it rest, loosely covered, for 8-9 hours (p. 26, A).

Day 1, Afternoon/Evening (8-9 hours later): Start making your dough

Follow the recipe for the Daily Bread, including bulk proofing (p. 26, B-E), so the dough is ready to be preshaped.

After the final rest of the bulk proof, give your dough a preshape: Turn the proofed dough out onto a floured work surface and divide it into 9 equal portions, about 84g (3 ounces) each. Gently flatten then fold up the sides of each piece of dough into the middle to give it tension. Flip these smooth-side up. Using a cupped hand, gently roll each portion of dough into a ball. Let rest, smooth-side up, for 20 minutes. During the bench rest, line a baking tray with parchment paper.

After 20 minutes, flip the preshaped balls, so they are smooth-side down. Gently flatten each ball with your palm, then repeat the process, folding the dough and shaping it into balls. Arrange the balls, 5cm (2 inches) apart, on the parchment paper-lined baking tray and lightly dust the tops with flour. Cover loosely and refrigerate overnight, at least 9 hours.

While the dough is chilling, roast the garlic. Preheat the oven to 135°C (275°F). Cut a thin slice off the top of each head of garlic, so the cloves are just barely exposed. Place each head, cut-side up, on a square of aluminum foil that's large enough to enclose the entire head. Generously drizzle the top of each head with olive oil, then wrap the foil around the garlic. Bake for about 1 hour, or until the garlic is soft and can be easily squeezed out. Use right away or store in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Make the labne. In a small bowl, mix the yogurt, garlic, lemon juice, and salt until smooth. Spoon into the center of a large piece of cheesecloth, then pull the sides up to make a pouch and twist tightly to close. Hang the cheesecloth pouch over your kitchen faucet or shower rod and let drip and drain overnight. Unwrap the labne and use right away or transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 1 week.

Day 2, Morning: Bake your bread

Remove the bialys from the refrigerator and allow to rise and come to room temperature for 2-3 hours.

Preheat the oven to 250°C (500°F). Once your bialys have warmed up, without lifting them off the tray, press the middle of each ball to create a depression that's about 5cm (2 inches) across. Each ball should have a roughly 2cm (¾ inch) puffed edge, so that the bialys look like small pizzas with a fat crust. Brush the center of each bialy with olive oil, then squeeze roasted garlic cloves into the center of each bialy. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until toasty brown.

While the bialys are baking, make the lemony herb sauce. Blend the dill, parsley, mint, chives, and tarragon in a food processor until roughly chopped. Add the salt. With the processor on, gradually drizzle in the olive oil and lemon juice, blending until it has a rustic slurry texture.

Serve the bialys hot, with a large spoonful of labne and a generous drizzle of the lemony herb sauce.

Roberta Pezzella

Roberta Pezzella's story is written on her body. Starting low on her ankles and winding up her calves, it cuts across her back then around and down her sleeves. When she lifts focaccia dough, you catch flashes of a life — a moment, a place, a mentor, a favorite grain. After more than twenty years fighting for her place in the Italian bread world, it's tattooed on her soul.

Roberta's bakery, PezZ de Pane — “piece of bread” in the local dialect — sits on the sunny end of a small square in Frosinone Alto, a hilly provincial capital an hour's drive from Rome. It's a straightforward shop, where she shapes bread in full view of clients. The facade is marked simply, *il forno* (“the bakery”), on a green and yellow sign that looks like a relic from the Sixties but is, in fact, another of Roberta's deliberately chosen details, the work of an artisan sign maker in Rome. A former art student, Roberta's interest in typography and graphic art shows up everywhere in the bakery. Framed graffiti hangs on the walls, and

handwritten labels, done in thick marker like street tags — Roberta's own writing — give her whole-grain crostate and feather-light country loaves an attitude and aesthetic all their own.

Hanging on the door is one last sign in Roberta's signature print. It's a warning to customers: They won't find rosette or filoni inside. These locally popular but cheap white breads are a far cry from Roberta's exacting ferments and shapes. Still, it's as bold as refusing to sell a baguette in France.

Nevertheless, this deters no one. A steady stream of neighbors drop by to chat while Roberta, between maneuvers at the oven, personally stuffs their morning brioches with pastry cream and jam. For Roman families passing through on their way home from seaside holidays, she slices her unsweetened chocolate loaf, toasts it in the residual heat of the oven, and then plasters it thick with butter and honey. Coos of pleasure, then silence. When was the last time they tasted bread and pastry like this? Had they ever?

Roberta is generous with her bread, which not all bakers are. “Have you ever smelled bread like this?” she asks, slicing in half a *pane di Ponza*, her “bread of Ponza.” The Ponza, named after an island southwest of Frosinone, is one of Roberta's most important loaves. Every weekend, so long as the season allows, she closes the bakery and goes to the island to gather wild fennel. After soaking it overnight, she uses the infused water to make bread. The result is mellow anise wafting over toasted grains.

Though the bakery is brand new — it opened in the winter of 2021 — Roberta herself is an institution. Her path in food began modestly. As a teenager, just graduated from the *liceo artistico* — art school — and without plans for the future, she took a job selling candy at a market stand in Rome. From there, she began selling fish from another stall, and by the time she was twenty-two, she was selling fish at the local Conad, a franchised grocery store. While there, Roberta started developing an interest in food. The grocery store





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had huge buying power and she was responsible for choosing all the fish. She threw herself into the trade and gained a reputation for obtaining only the best and only the freshest fish. Unsurprisingly, her counter was celebrated for its quality.

After three years, despite her success, Roberta became frustrated. There were other foods she was

in the pastry department, but during her free mornings, she strayed from the restaurant to learn bread making from Gabriele Bonci, the renowned panettiere. She knew Beck wanted to transform the restaurant's bread offerings and Bonci gave her an idea: Since Beck is German, why not make him a rye bread? Roberta ultimately created a suite of breads that are still

revamping the pastry section, making it profitable and expanding the plant-based offerings. And just as she'd done with the fish counter and the bread basket, she transformed the pastry shop. From there, she was put on bread.

At La Pergola, Roberta used ten kilos (twenty-two pounds) of flour a day. Suddenly, at Bonci's, she was using fifty to sixty times that amount. And, she was the manager, in charge of a whole team of bakers. In the jealous masculine environment, no one would help her except Franco Palermo.

Franco was an unusual employee. A master baker who had taught Bonci to make bread, Franco came and went as he pleased. Roberta was technically his boss, but he was her guru, and took her deeper into bread making. This was her proper formation as a baker. For three years, Roberta stayed at Panificio Bonci, suffering the aggression of her colleagues but perfecting her craft. Until it became too much. She fell into a depression and left.

Contemplating her future, Roberta was lost as to where to go next. It was then that she remembered her old bosses at the Conad grocery store in Frosinone. They owned twelve stores in total, and produced

“ Within months of opening, PezZ de Pane feels so settled, as though it's always been here.

curious about beyond fish. She could see them around the grocery store — bread, vegetables, fruits. At the checkout, she began buying the culinary magazine *Gambero Rosso* to read about the restaurant world and scan for recommendations. She also started taking herself out to dinner and suddenly, she was having so many new food experiences that she decided that something needed to change. At twenty-five, Roberta dumped her boyfriend, left Frosinone, and went to Rome to attend culinary school.

In a class of thirty students, Roberta finished first, and knew exactly where she wanted to go next — La Pergola, a Roman restaurant with three Michelin stars headed by chef Heinz Beck. She started working

being served at La Pergola today. But fine dining is a demanding environment and seven years was long enough. By the time she left her post as La Pergola's head baker in 2013, Roberta was burned-out. It was around the same time that Gabriele Bonci, her old friend and mentor, called her up. Would she come run the show at his bakery, Panificio Bonci? Roberta said yes.

Panificio Bonci, though, was not La Pergola. Roberta remembers a chaotic, anarchic, all-male environment. In short, she says, it was complicated. From the day Roberta showed up, in her clean chef's jacket straight from fine dining, she was out of place and resented. Bonci put her to work



all of their own bread in a bakery in the mountains nearby. Roberta remembered that they'd always spoken about changing the grocery store's bakery offerings and she saw an opportunity: Maybe she could bring better bread to the people? Something good, healthy, not super elaborate? She convinced the owners to hire her back — not as a fishmonger this time, but as a baker.

From day one, Conad's central bakery provided its own challenges. It had been so industrialized that the workers couldn't tell one kind of flour from another. Bread was exclusively machine-shaped. Simply put, there was no craftsmanship. When Roberta took charge, she got rid of all the machinery, apart from two basic mixers, and set to work teaching the staff how to bake. She quickly discovered a familiar problem that was going to be harder to fix — the fact that she's a woman. Slowly though, Roberta changed Conad's bread production. She taught the team to hand shape, introduced natural fermentation, and improved the flours they used. Chefs started to come from all over to intern and learn from Roberta. And most importantly, the customers at the grocery stores responded. They liked what she'd done and her breads were now in demand. Roberta had done it again.

But it couldn't last. Despite all the improvements, Conad's owners didn't want to raise their bread prices. They complained that the materials and labor were too expensive and insisted they had to cut corners. And then one day, Roberta arrived at work to find all the machinery back on the floor. The product range she'd spent years developing was destroyed. She quit, devastated and — again — unsure of where to go next.

And so she ran away to Ponza and got a job frying fish at what she describes as the worst restaurant on the island. For months, no one knew where Roberta was, but when she finally emerged, she was ready to start fresh. For the next two years, she taught, consulted, learned,



and traveled, visiting bakeries in San Francisco, Copenhagen, and Germany, despite only speaking Italian. "I always find ways to communicate," she says, smiling.

And then the pandemic hit and all of Italy went into lockdown. Overnight, Roberta's consulting work dried up. She knew she never wanted to work for anyone else again. One day, in Frosinone, she came across a closed pizzeria with a "for rent" sign in the window and that was it. She decided to open her own shop, something she'd never considered before.

Within months of opening, PezZ de Pane feels so settled, an easy part of the scenery of Frosinone. It's as though it's always been here. On an average summer morning, as

the sun starts to burn, Roberta runs out to the covered market to buy the green and pink figs she'll smash onto pizza bianca with prosciutto, as well as the plum tomatoes she'll crush on her focaccia barese. A little later, her parents drop by, handing over a lunch of fava beans for her to share with her cashier and intern during the inevitable midday siesta. Down the street is the Conad where she once sold fish.

There's a light atmosphere amongst Roberta and the two women who work with her. Tomorrow they'll all take a day off. Beach plans are discussed. A trip to Abruzzo. Roberta, as usual, will go to the island of Ponza. And when she comes back, she'll bring the last of the season's fennel.