



## Paul's Bread Pages

The site for bread lovers everywhere

### Sourdough Bread

The idea of sourdough baking is an old one. Originally, by taking equal parts of flour and water/milk mix and standing it for about 5 days to pick up yeasts from the air, a starter liquid would form. This can be used to add to flour to make leavened bread. The yeast in the starter will cause the bread to rise and the flavour of the starter will add to the taste of the bread.

A modern and much safer solution to sourdough is to mix flour, milk and water with a weak yeast solution and leave to ferment for 2 days. The sourdough starter should look like a wet batter. Use the sourdough starter to add to bread mixed without yeast, and allow two to three kneadings before baking. This is a cheat, but it will avoid the risk of airborne bacterial contaminants which could alter the taste or make the bread unsafe.

Another method of making a sourdough starter uses starch, sugar and water. This is a traditional method using 100g of flaked or grated potato, a tablespoon of sugar and 100ml of water. This solution should be mixed and left for about 2 days to start fermenting. Then it should be covered and left for a further 3 days – when it can be strained and used as a starter for bread.

Take 500g of flour. Add 3 tablespoons of the sourdough starter and a little extra warm water. Knead the mixture to form a stiff dough and leave to rise for at least an hour. Knock back and knead again. Allow a further hour of rising then knock back again and knead. Form into loaves and bake in a hot oven when risen.

#### Derbyshire Sourdough Loaf

From *Fresh Basil* 23 Strutt Street, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 1UN

This type of bread is becoming quite popular on the health food and delicatessen market. It is very tasty bread which appeals to a lot of people.

To cut the top of a loaf for texture, bake for 5 minutes – then cut with a sharp knife, using swift cuts – return to the oven and continue to bake the bread. The crust carries a lot of flavour and the logic here is that the larger crust surface gives the loaf more flavour.

