

Recipe for 1 x 900g Wakelyns' Bakery Tin Loaf

Henrietta and Maisie have very kindly shared their recipe (or formula) for the 100% wholemeal loaves they bake at Wakelyns Agroforestry. Wakelyns is home to the YQ wheat population and so it's the bakery's default flour, but with a few minor tweaks this formula will work with any wholegrain flour.

To build the starter

35g water from the cold tap
75g wholegrain YQ wheat flour
25g active starter

Mix all the ingredients together until well combined, cover and leave to ferment overnight, or for at least 10 hours. Please note that this is a stiff starter therefore it will look stiff! And quite dry. This is normal.

To make the dough

335g water at 21C, a little warmer if your house is cold, a little cooler if your house is warm (this is because the ideal dough temperature we want to achieve is about 21C)
130g starter from above
425g wholegrain YQ wheat flour
10g sea salt

Mix

In a large bowl, mix all the all the ingredients using one hand until well combined. Keep working the mix for around 5 minutes until it starts to feel springy or doughy as opposed to cakey.

Knead



Lightly dampen your work surface and turn the dough out of the bowl. Roll your shoulders back, stand with your feet shoulder width apart, and start to knead; adding your energy to the dough. Depending on your method, you will need to do this for around 15 minutes. It may feel sticky to begin with but keep going! Try not to add any extra flour or water. Over time it will start to become an elastic, silky and smooth dough. You can test the strength of the dough by checking to see if a membrane has formed when you gently stretch out a piece of the dough.

Bulk prove / ferment

Check the temperature of the dough, it should be at around 21-22C.

Lightly oil your mixing bowl or splash it with a little water. Pull the dough across the work surface using a tucking motion and shape it into a round, with a slight smooth tension forming on the top of the dough. Place the dough, smooth side down, into your mixing bowl. Cover with a damp tea towel or a lid, and leave in a cool area, around 21C, to bulk prove for two and half hours.

Half an hour into the bulk prove, give the dough a stretch and fold. With wet hands, gently lift one side of the dough and give it a light stretch and fold it into the centre. Work your way around the dough stretching and folding until you get back to the beginning. 30 minutes later, repeat this process.



Shape and into the tin

Grease a 1kg loaf tin – we use Mike Stringer’s organic rapeseed oil from Hodmedod. As a guide, our tins are approximately 8.5cm deep x 10cm wide x 20cm long.

Your dough should now be ready put into the tin, there’s little need to shape. It is ready when, if you shake the bowl, it has a good wobble and when touched it should feel light and quite full of air. If you think it needs a little longer, let it hang out for a little longer.

Wet your hands and gently place them under the dough. Lift it up and place it straight into the tin, being gentle with the dough so as not to lose too much aeration. Try to ensure that the dough fits well into the shape of the tin, and the top is relatively smooth. Leave the tin somewhere warm but not hot for around 3 hours for its final prove. It may take more or less time depending on the room temperature. You may need to lightly splash/spray the top with water to prevent the crust from drying out. It should rise to the top of the tin.



Stencil and bake



At this point, you can stencil the top of the loaf with anything you like; hold your hand over the dough and sift over the flour for your handshape; cut out a shape that means something to you or the person you are giving your loaf to. Do this by spraying the top of the loaf with a little water and using a bit more wholegrain YQ flour and a sieve.

Bake at 230C for 35 minutes or until a deep brown crust has formed. The loaf sounds hollow when you tap it, comes out of the tin easily and the centre will have reached 95C. Wait until it has fully cooled down before you slice it, if you can! We really hope you enjoy it - and have fun!

Starter maintenance

Maintaining your starter is simple and can fit into your everyday routine. There is little waste from this method. A few days before baking, feed it twice daily for maximum activity. Depending on the number of loaves you are making bulk the starter up gradually with each feed using this ratio: 3 parts flour to 1.5 parts water and 1 part starter. An active happy starter will bubble a little and smell slightly sour.

For baking on a regular basis:

Keep your starter in your kitchen or store cupboard, not fridge. Feed twice a day, as below. Fit these feeds into your morning and evening routines. If that’s too much, once a day is also fine.

30g wholegrain flour

15g water from the cold tap – when it’s cold, use slightly warmer water

10g starter

Mix all the ingredients together, roll into a ball and keep in a jar

For baking once a month or less:

Keep your starter in the fridge and feed it once a week with the above quantities. Take it out of the fridge three days before baking, feeding it twice a day as above.