

Beginner Sourdough Workshop



Introductions



Jim Caputo (retired)

Priorities: Health, Relationships, Hobbies



Alyssa Simpson

- Coordinator of adult programming at Mahomet Public Library
- Enjoy crafts, reading, cooking and baking
- Novice sourdough baker

Six topics for this evening

Jim

1. Two terms and a dash of history
2. Tools, resources, examples
3. Ten lessons learned through trial and error

Alyssa

4. Eight steps of the baking process
5. Sourdough starter demo, feeding routine
6. FAQs and tips on how to fit bread baking into a busy schedule

1. Two terms and a dash of history



What is sourdough bread?

Bread made from dough, using a starter that's created by naturally occurring yeast fermentation processes

What is starter?

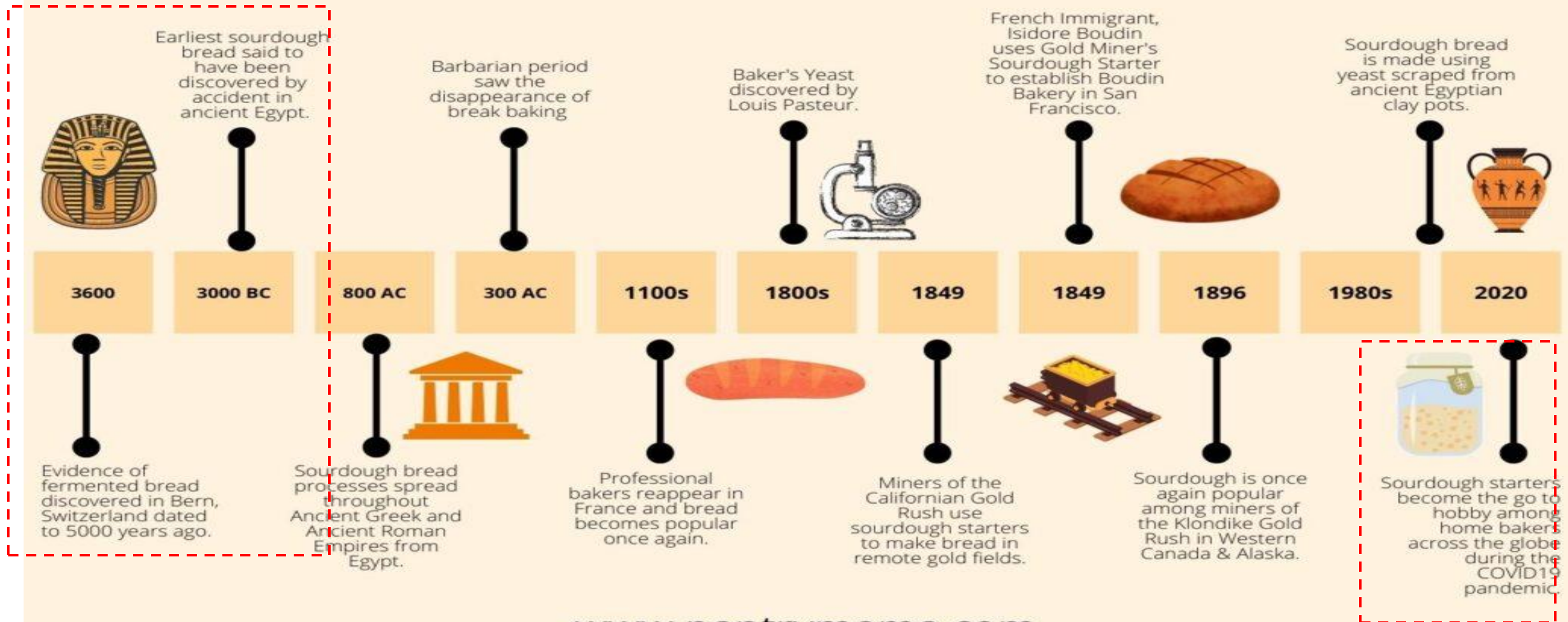
A fermented flour/water mixture that contains wild yeast and good bacteria.

Benefits of Sourdough

- Fermented foods, like sourdough, can **improve digestion and boost gut health** by promoting beneficial bacteria.
- Contains probiotics and exposes nutrients in the flour, improving vitamin and minerals absorption.
- Fermentation lowers glycemic index, meaning a slower rise in blood sugar.

HISTORY OF SOURDOUGH

HOW WILD YEAST COLONISED THE MODERN WORLD



2. Tools, resources and examples



Helpful tools

MUST-HAVES

- Bread pan or Dutch oven
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Mixing bowls
- Oven mittens or pads
- Sourdough starter container

NICE TO HAVE

- Bench scraper
- Bread 'hammock'
- Calculator
- Kitchen scale
- Kitchen thermometer
- Proofing basket (aka Banneton)
- Linen bread bags for storage
- Razor blade or a 'lame'
- Cooling racks

Dutch oven, banneton and scoring examples



Additional information included in handouts

- Popular authors
- Web content creators
- Baking tips
- Information about varieties of flour, salts, waters

Mahomet Public Library is a great resource



3. Ten lessons learned by trial and error



Ten lessons learned by trial and error

1. Dried starter can be stubborn to remove
2. Pitch excess starter in trash can, not down the drain
3. Non-chlorinated water is better for yeast growth
4. A container with markings can help monitor the dough rise
5. Rice flour works great to prevent sticking and enhance scoring

Ten lessons learned through trial and error

6. Apply baking flour or a thin layer of oil to baking pans/dutch oven
7. Doughs that proof in the fridge are easier to score
8. A gentler touch when shaping dough helps retain gasses
9. The higher the room temperature, the faster the proofing process
10. Keep a finger bowl nearby to rinse dough off hands

4. Eight steps of sourdough baking



Eight steps of sourdough baking

1. **Feed** the starter
2. **Mix** dough (flour, water, salt)
3. **Autolyse** allows dough to rest and gluten network develop
4. **Knead** or fold dough
5. **Bulk ferment**: Let dough rest and rise a few hours
6. **Shape** dough into a loaf
7. **Final proof**: Let dough rise one last time
8. **Score** dough with sharp razor blade or a 'lame', and then **bake**

Step 1: Feed the starter

- There are many methods, I will describe what I typically do.
- I feed my starter a 1:1:1 (by weight) ratio.
 - This means if I have 50 grams of starter, I will feed it 50 grams of flour and 50 grams of water.
 - It is key to use equal parts of water and flour. The amount of starter you use can vary. The amount of starter you use can affect how long it takes your starter to rise.
 - Starter you do not feed is called discard

Signs your starter is ready

- Doubles in size
- Lots of bubbles
- Spongy texture
- Pleasant smell
- Floats in water

Step 2: Mix the dough

- Dough contains; starter, flour, water and salt
- Basic Sourdough Recipe (there are many variations to try!)
 - This is 70% hydration and good for beginners
 - 100 grams starter
 - 350 grams water
 - 500 grams flour
 - 10 grams salt

Step 3: Autolyse

- Let dough rest, typically 30 minutes to 1 hour.
- Resting allows the flour to soak up the water.
- Some recipes may not call for the autolyse step.
- Some recipes (mainly whole wheat) have you mix the flour and water before adding the starter and salt.

Step 4: Knead or Fold Dough

- The process can vary greatly.
- Typically done in 30-minute intervals, for 2 hours.
- Not an exact science. It helps to build gluten.
 - Stretch and fold
 - Coil folds
 - Slap and folds

Step 5: Bulk Fermentation

- AKA; "*The first rise*"
- The initial fermentation period where dough rises, and develops flavor and texture.
- Dough should approximately double in size

Step 6: Shaping

- Manipulates the dough into your preferred shape
- Creates tension in the dough.
- Demonstration

Step 7: Final Proof

- Similar to bulk fermentation, but done after shaping.
- A 'Poke test' helps determine when proofing is done
- Can be done at different temperatures.
 - At room temperatures: 1-4 hours
 - In the refrigerator: 8-16 hours; up to 48 hours



Step 8: Score and bake

- Score dough to relieve surface tension and improve the rise
- There are many ways to bake!
- I typically preheat oven to 450 degrees with a dutch oven inside.
- I bake at 450 for 20 minutes with lid on
- Remove lid and reduce temp to 400, bake 30 additional minutes

Seven frequently asked questions?

1. What are some tips to fit bread baking into a busy schedule?
2. Does it matter what type of flour I use?
3. What is the purpose of discarding starter?
4. What if I miss a starter feeding?
5. Why is my starter not very active?
6. Why does my starter smell bad?
7. Why does my starter have liquid on top?