

Maya's Finnish Sourdough Rye Bread

Heather Dane

*This bread works well with any bone broth or stock.

Several years ago I traveled with Louise to Scotland for a Hay House I Can Do It event. We were excited because since Wayne Dyer was speaking there as well, we'd get to see Maya Labos. Maya has been Wayne's agent and right hand for more than thirty years. Maya is from Finland. She's beautiful, funny, full of life and spitfire. She'll tell it like it is, and even if it's brutally honest, you'll love her for it. You can always count on Maya for a madcap story and a lot of laughs!

In Scotland, Maya bought five loaves of brown Irish soda bread to take on the upcoming cruise, where Wayne would be speaking. Two weeks later, I got a call from Maya. "I could not believe it, I put the bread in paper and when I got on the cruise five days later, it was all moldy," she told me.

"Maya, why did you think it wouldn't be moldy after five days in paper?" I asked. That's when it hit me. I had just been researching sourdough bread and learned that people in other countries grew up eating sourdough that they hung on a pole for an entire month. Sourdough bread is living bread. It's how our ancestors made bread full of probiotics that could last without refrigeration or freezing. Maya thought her soda bread was like the bread she grew up with.

"Okay, I'm making you some authentic Finnish sourdough bread," I told her. After researching a bit, I found out how to get an authentic dry starter and experimented with a recipe, until it was perfected. This is the result of that recipe and has now been modified to add bone broth because we all deserve to have even better hair, skin, nails and digestion while eating bread!

Maya has confirmed that this bread reminds her of her childhood. She loves to bake it until it's dry and slather it with butter. Maya's not the only one who loves this bread. Everyone who tastes it loves it and I've shared a bit of my activated starter with people all over the country. Once you have the activated starter, this no knead bread is super easy to make. It's worth learning how to do because it makes the perfect travel food and snack. You are taking a grain with very little gluten and activating it with probiotics, so that it's a living bread that delivers probiotics into your body. Add the bone broth and you've got something really special.

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Preparation Time

- Plan 8 days in advance (once you have a dry starter in hand) or 3 days in advance if you have an activated flour and water mixture starter in your refrigerator.
- It takes 7 days to activate a dry starter. Activating it is basically making a flour and water mixture until it's rising as it should per the instructions.
- Once you have an activated starter, about 3 days to make the bread. This consists of making sure the starter is rising properly, possibly feeding the starter with flour and water for a couple days and then mixing the batter, letting it rise and baking the bread.
- Making the bread itself takes 10 minutes. Baking it takes about 30 to 40 minutes. The rest of the time is all waiting for the starter to rise and for the bread dough to rise.

Servings: About 20 pieces of bread

Preparation Notes – Before You Can Make Bread:

1. Purchase a dry Finland Sourdough Rye Starter. We recommend Ed Wood's Sourdoughs International because they carry many authentic starters from around the world. You can order yours here:
www.sourdo.com/cultures/finland/
2. While you're waiting for your starter, watch some videos on how to make sourdough bread. YouTube has a bunch of options. You can look up how to make sourdough bread and no knead sourdough bread. This bread is no knead, which makes it extra easy. The hardest part is just understanding the steps and once you get them, the whole thing is really easy. It's not as delicate a process as the videos lead you to believe. Sourdough rye is hardy and can handle a lot of imperfect handling.
3. Once you receive your dry starter, you will follow the instructions to activate it. This requires about seven days of feeding the starter, which is essentially filling a jar with flour and water and watching it rise. It's easy, but it takes a 10-minute per day commitment.

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4. After you've activated your starter, store it in a quart-sized wide mouth jar, like a Ball jar with the lid loosened or just sitting on top, so that air can get in and out.
5. You will keep this starter in the refrigerator until you are ready to make bread. Once per week, you will "feed" the starter to keep it alive and well. To do this, you will open the jar and add 1 cup of stoneground organic rye flour and 3/4 cups water. Mix this up well, making sure to get all of the flour mixed in. The starter is pretty hardy, so if you miss a week, you can still use it – see instructions for activating and reviving your starter, below.
6. When you are ready to bake bread, plan 3 to 4 days ahead (3 days of feedings and 1 day to let the bread rise)! You might be able to cut corners and do 1 or 2 days ahead, but the recommendation is 3 days ahead (if it doubles in size when left overnight, you can likely make the bread the next day if you need to cut corners).

Here is what you will do to feed the starter:

- Take the starter out of the refrigerator. If you haven't fed it in awhile and it has some brown liquid on it (called hooch), you can either pour it off or stir it right back in. It's not "bad," it just has been dormant.
- Feed the starter with 1 cup flour and 3/4 cup water and stir it all up well. Then leave it on your countertop with the lid just sitting on top, so air can flow through. Let it sit for 12 to 24 hours before feeding it again. We like to feed it once per day for 3 days. It will grow, possibly doubling in size and showing some air bubbles in the mixture.
- After 12 to 24 hours, feed it again. You can take some of the starter out to make room for it to grow. My recommendation is to take it out, start a new jar of starter so that you have a backup, and feed both of them. You could keep doing this and end up with a lot of jars! So unless your friends want some, use it for recipes or discard the extra when you go to feed it again. It will keep growing.
- Feed it again for the 3rd time. Let it grow for 12 to 24 hours and then you will be ready to make your bread!

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Making the Bread: After you have fed the sourdough starter 3 times and is is doubling in size, you are ready to use this bread recipe (below). This could take 2 days to allow time for the bread to rise.

Tips:

- Watching a video really helps! Here are some options. Remember, you have a starter that has already been started, so you will need to feed it to get it ready to bake, but you don't have to start all the way from the beginning with a dry starter (you don't have to "activate" it).
http://www.culturesforhealth.com/how-to-videos#sourdough_videos. The videos you want are how to make sourdough bread and how to care for and feed your starter.
- Rye does not rise as much as other gluten or wheat breads because it has much less gluten. Also, if you use a stoneground flour, it won't rise as much. It's a flatter bread and as We've been told by Maya, this flat bread is exactly what she was used to eating growing up in Finland.
- This dough is sticky. Rinse everything immediately after you make the bread to keep cleanup simple. We use a dobie sponge to clean the dough off hands and utensils and it works like a dream.
- When baking the bread, using the coconut oil or butter along with the sprinkled flour and caraway seeds makes all the difference in having a perfect non-stick surface for the bread. Do it.
- Let your bread cool for at least 3 hours on a wire rack before cutting. Some say to let the bread "cure" or sit for 2 days before eating because the flavor really comes out. We are rarely able to wait that long (hee hee).
- Finnish people say to store the bread in a paper bag. Maya tells us it's because they like it dry and crispy. You might like it better stored in a plastic bag to keep it soft. Try it and see what you think. It should last longer than a week out of the fridge or freezer and still be delicious. In Finland, they leave it out for a month, which is possible to do without molding because it's a live bread. It will dry out over time though, so we tend to leave it out for a week and then slice up what we haven't used and put it in the freezer. If you pre-slice it, you can pop a piece or two in the toaster to warm up as needed.

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Maya's Finnish Sourdough Rye Bread Recipe

Ingredients

- 2 cups organic sprouted rye flour (using sprouted flour makes the bread easier to digest and is optional)
- 2 tablespoons blackstrap molasses
- 1.5 tablespoons caraway seeds
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 1 cup bone broth (any flavored or neutral broth or stock works for this recipe)
- 1/4 cup water
- 1.25 cups of your prepared rye flour starter

Instructions

- Mix up all ingredients well in a glass bowl, using a wooden spoon. We usually mix it by hand; at least 50 strokes or for 2 to 4 minutes. You will have a smooth, sticky dough. You do not need to knead it (hooray!).
- Put a cover on the bowl and let it sit for 5 hours or overnight. Look for it to almost double in size.
- Once it has doubled in size and you are ready to bake the bread, pour the bread dough onto a well-floured surface. This dough will be rather wet and sticky, so have a lot of flour and water on hand so that you can use it to make it easier to work with the bread dough. Let the dough sit for 15 to 30 minutes to give it a "rest."
- While the dough is resting, preheat your oven to 435° F.
- Grease your bread pan with coconut oil or butter, sprinkling some flour over the coconut oil or butter and then sprinkling some caraway seeds over the flour. This will make a nice non-stick surface.
 - You can use a regular bread loaf pan that is glass or silicone, but avoid metal. A lot of sourdough breadmakers swear by using stone, like a LaCloche clay bread baker (which you can purchase online or at your local kitchen store). We have also made the bread in a silicone bread pan and a glass bread pan, which worked out really well too.

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- Now put the bread batter into your pan. Flouring your hands will help keep it from sticking to them as you move it into the pan. It may be very wet and you can add more flour to the batter as you are working with it to get it into the pan (adding flour on top and the sides to keep it from sticking).
- Once you have it in the pan, take a sharp knife and put some slits (like a tic tac toe) into the top. This will allow air to escape during cooking and give it a nice look once baked. If your knife sticks, put water on it so that it slips through easily.
- Bake at 435° F for 30 minutes and then check the bread. Press the center to see if it's firm and bounces back. Check with a meat thermometer. Once the center of the bread reaches 220° F, it's done. You will likely need to bake for another 10 to 15 minutes. Turn the oven temperature down to 390° F for the last 10 to 15 minutes. The top should be will brown a bit and get slightly drier. If you are using a LaCloche or stonewear with a top, remove the top for the last 10 to 15 minutes of baking.
- Allow the bread to cool before removing from the bread pan. Make sure it's completely cool before slicing or it could become gummy.

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