

Sourdough Pumpernickel

Ingredients

Sponge

- 1 1/3 cups (294g) ripe (fed) sourdough starter
- 1 cup (227g) room temperature water, black coffee, or potato water (water in which potatoes have been boiled)
- 2 cups (213g) pumpernickel flour
- 1/2 cup (64g) chopped onion

Dough

- 2 tablespoons (25g) vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 cup (85g) molasses
- 4 cups (482g) all-purpose flour

Directions

Sponge

- Measure the starter into a bowl. Add the water, coffee, or potato water; the pumpernickel, and onion. Stir together, cover, and let rest at room temperature overnight.

Dough

- The next day, stir the oil, salt and molasses into the sponge. Stir in the flour 1 cup at a time, until the dough comes together.
- Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead, adding only enough additional flour to keep it from sticking to your hands.
- Once the dough has come together, shape it into a boule & place it in a floured or lined brotform.
- Cover and let rise in a draft-free spot until puffy, about 1 to 3 hours depending on the temperature and the strength of your starter.

Baking

- About an hour before the boule is finished rising, preheat the oven to 425°F with a baking sheet or stone on the center rack. Place an empty cast-iron skillet on the lowest rack.
- Turn the boule, smooth side up, very gently onto a baker's peel dusted with semolina or cornmeal, or onto a piece of parchment. Use a lame or very sharp knife to make several slashes across the top of the loaf.
- Transfer the boule to the hot baking sheet or stone. Pour about 1 cup of boiling water into the cast iron frying pan to produce steam. Be sure to wear good oven mitts to shield your hands and arms. Quickly close the oven door to trap the steam.
- Bake for 40 to 45 minutes. It's done when the center temperature is 200°F when measured with a digital thermometer.
- Remove the boule from the oven and cool it on a rack before slicing.