

WHAT YOU
FOODSTUF
yeast (the I
“active dry”)
water
whole-whe
bread flour
sea salt, fin
rice flour

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loaf. So
recipe,



Holy moly,
I can't believe
I made this!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

FOODSTUFF

yeast (the kind in little packets, "active dry," is just fine)

water

whole-wheat flour

bread flour

sea salt, fine grind

rice flour

TOOLS

measuring spoons

measuring cups

thermometer (optional)

big mixing bowl (at least 6 in/15 cm tall and 12 in/31 cm wide)

mixing spoon (optional)

plate or plastic wrap (to cover bowl)

spatula or bench knife

proofing basket and cloth (see page 35 for other options)

baking stone and oven-safe pot or bowl (at least 6 in/15 cm tall and 12 in/31 cm wide) OR a Dutch oven

parchment paper

large plate or pizza peel

double-edged razor blade and handle (see page 38)

cooling rack (optional)

A HEARTH LOAF

This is a different way of baking the same dough that you just made in the previous lesson. Using loaf pans is a fabulous way to start baking, and if you're looking for rectangular loaves, it's the way to go. But I really love me a hearth loaf. (That just sounds so sexy, doesn't it? Say it out loud: *hearth loaf*. So liberated, so rustic, so pure.) For this recipe, you're going to shape the bread into a loaf

and let it rise in a little basket, then you're going to bake it directly on the "hearth," or floor of the oven. In your home oven, a baking stone (or Dutch oven) will act as the hearth. Another exciting and dangerous addition to this recipe: You're going to slash the top of your loaf with a razor blade.

1. Gather your foodstuff and tools. Get all the stuff that's listed in the table.

→ A very good question!

WHY IS THIS LOAF CALLED A "HEARTH" LOAF?
"Hearth" is the name for the bottom of the oven, or fireplace. In professional bread ovens, the bottoms are made of thick slabs of concrete, so that you can bake the bread right on them. These ovens also have steam injectors, which make the baking chamber fill up with steam at the press of a button. But get this—you don't need all that fancy stuff to make an incredible hearth loaf at home. The way that I suggest you bake this loaf, especially if you're a beginning bread baker, is to just use a baking stone with a metal pot or bowl flipped upside down on top of the bread. The baking stone holds on to heat really well, so that the dough can rise quickly when you first put it in the oven. And the metal pot or bowl traps the moisture that evaporates from the dough, providing a nice, steamy environment for the bread to bake in. If you're feeling crafty and are on a budget, instead of a baking stone you can use unfinished quarry tiles, which should be available at your hardware store. As for the metal pot, you just want something that can (1) fit on top of your loaf, (2) get good and hot, and (3) trap the steam from the bread. Make sure your pot or bowl has a flat top, so that it forms a tight seal on the baking stone. Handles are a plus (provided they can withstand high heat), as they make lifting the pot or bowl very easy. Detailed instructions about all of this are given later.

→ A very good question!

WHY NOT JUST BAKE THE LOAF IN A DUTCH OVEN? I'VE HEARD OF THAT METHOD.

Baking bread in a Dutch oven is a great way to bake hearth loaves at home, for sure. This method was popularized by Jim Lahey's "no-knead" method, and Chad Robertson's gorgeous book *Tartine Bread*. I'm sure other folks have written about it as well, but it was through

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these two sources that I realized what a miraculous technique it is. It traps all the steam from the baking bread and also blasts the bread with heat, which contributes to "oven spring"—the rapid increase in volume of the loaf upon entering the oven. Oh yeah—by "Dutch oven" I just mean a large, thick-walled pot (with a lid) that is big enough to hold your bread. Cast iron works great, as does Le Creuset. The only issue with the Dutch oven method is that loading your bread into it can be tricky. I've flopped many a loaf into a 500°F/260°C Dutch oven only to have the bread land lopsided or deflate from the impact of being dropped. That being said, if you don't have a baking stone, a Dutch oven is still a wonderful way to bake a hearth loaf.

2. Make the pre-ferment. Measure the following, toss 'em into a big bowl, and stir it up with a spoon (or your hand if you're feelin' frisky):

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
yeast	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	1 tsp
cool water (60°F/15°C)	1/2 cup/ 120 g	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g
whole-wheat flour	3/4 cup/ 105 g	1 1/2 cups/ 210 g	3 cups/ 420 g

You just want to get things mixed evenly. It'll be like a thick pancake batter. This will take only 30 seconds or so.

3. Let the magic happen. Cover the bowl with a plate or plastic wrap—just so the moisture can't sneak out of the bowl—and put it in a cool place (55 to 65°F/13 to 18°C) for about 12 hours (overnight is fine, or during the day while you're at work/playing hooky).

4. Mix the dough. Lift the cover and take a peek. There should be a bunch of bubbles on top, and it should be giving off a nice odor—a little tangy and nutty. If this isn't the case, be patient and leave it alone for another 3 to 4 hours. Then mix in:

lukewarm
water
(80°F/27°C)

bread flour

sea salt,
fine grind

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5. Let the
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	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
lukewarm water (80°F/27°C)	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g	4 cups/ 960 g
bread flour	2½ cups/ 375 g	5 cups/ 750 g	10 cups/ 1,500 g
sea salt, fine grind	2 tsp/ 12 g	4 tsp/ 24 g	2 Tbsp plus 2 tsp/ 48 g

Roll up your sleeve, and mush it up real nice. You just want to get things mixed evenly—don’t bother kneading the dough. If there is flour that won’t mix into the dough, toss in another 1 to 2 Tbsp or two of water, or add 1 to 2 Tbsp of flour if the dough’s too wet.

5. Let the magic happen. Cover the bowl and let it sit for 3 to 4 hours, then stick it in the fridge. Leave it there for at least 3 hours, or up to a week.

→ *A very good question!*

WHY DO I HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE MAGIC TO HAPPEN?

When making yeasted breads—with store-bought yeast or “wild yeast” (sourdough)—you do lots of waiting. But this waiting is when the magic happens. The little yeasts are slaving away for you, reproducing and consuming nutrients in the flour, and in the process making carbon dioxide, alcohol, and acids. These things are all wonderful for bread, but only in the right amounts. If you don’t wait long enough, there won’t be enough of the yeast’s gas to raise the bread, and you’ll end up with a dense loaf. But if you wait too long, you’ll end up with a similar result, for a totally different reason: Basically, the yeast will blow up the dough beyond its maximum volume, and it will essentially pop, never to rise again. This is a sad occurrence, and a rite of passage in the life of every bread baker. It will probably ruin your day, but the next day will be brighter, I promise.

Here’s where we start to get crazy, compared with what we’ve been doing thus far. Brace yourself. Take a deep breath. Let’s do it.

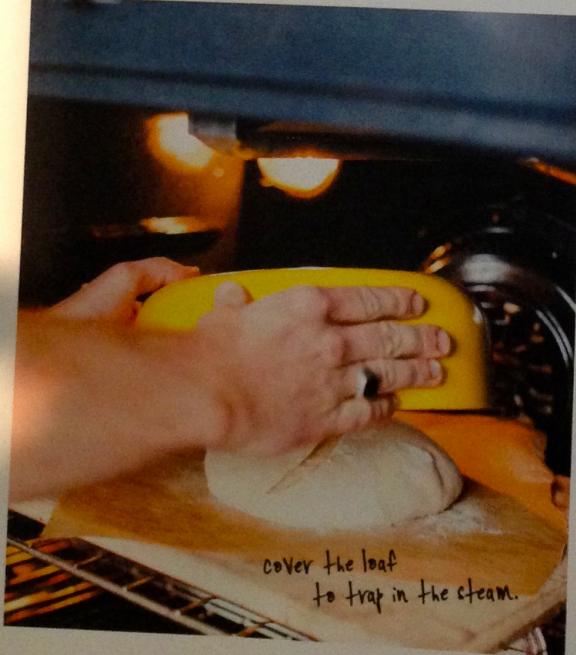
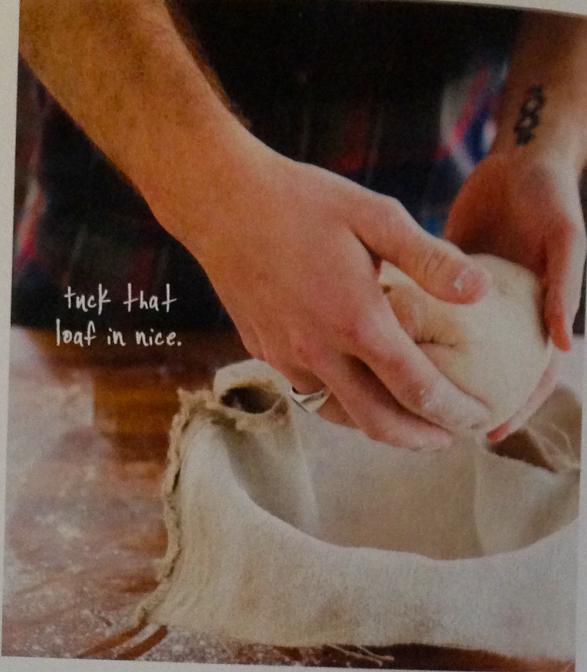
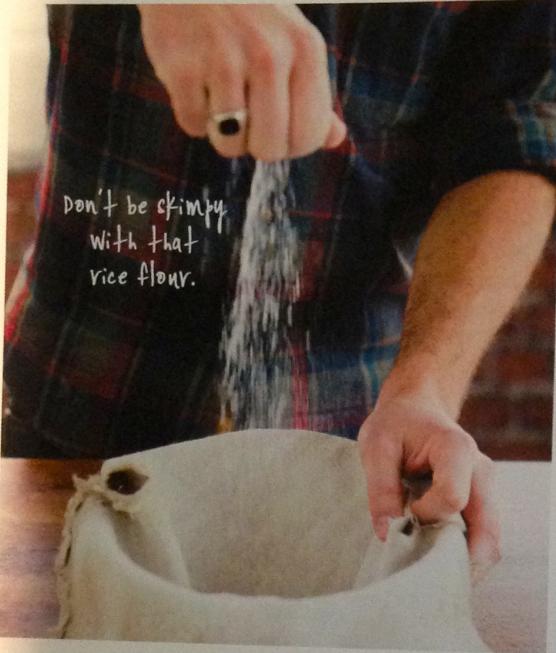
6. Shape your loaf. Sprinkle a handful of bread flour on your counter, and pour the dough out. If you’re making more than one loaf, cut your dough into equal-size pieces. Be nice and gentle with the dough—it has gas in it, and you want to keep most of it there. Gently grab a corner of the dough and fold it up and over into the middle. Do the same thing around the entire piece of dough until you’ve folded in the dough around the entire perimeter, and you’ve just got a tight little seam on top. Flip your loaf so that the seam you just made is facing down, using a spatula or bench knife if it sticks at all to the table. Let it sit there for a few minutes, to encourage the seam you just made to stick together.

7. Prepare the proofing basket. Take your proofing cloth (see the following “proofing basket” info) and lay it flat on your counter. Sprinkle a handful of **rice flour** on it, and rub it into the fabric with your fingers. (Rice flour is amazing in that it almost guarantees your dough won’t stick to the cloth.) Now tuck the cloth into your proofing basket and adjust it so that there aren’t many sharp corners for the dough to get stuck in. Sprinkle the cloth with another 1 Tbsp of rice flour.

→ *A very good question!*

WHAT’S A PROOFING BASKET?

Once you’ve shaped your dough into a loaf, you let it “proof”—this is just a fancy of way saying that you leave it alone so that the yeast can produce carbon dioxide, thereby making the loaf expand and giving it a nice, airy texture. So now that we know this, you can probably guess what a “proofing basket” is—a basket in which you let your loaf proof! A proofing basket gives support to the dough, so that it can keep its shape while it rises. The loaf stays in the proofing basket right up until it goes in the oven. There are lots of different styles for proofing baskets. They come in a bunch of different materials,



such as willow, wicker, and plastic. And they come in a bunch of different shapes and sizes—round ones, long skinny ones, short fat ones, and everything in between.

For YOUR proofing basket you can use any number of things: a colander, a wicker basket, or even just a mixing bowl. It's best if the basket has holes in it, but a bowl will work just fine. Use a piece of fabric that is tightly woven, such as linen or a cotton napkin. Just don't use a towel that has little "barbs" on it, or else your loaf may stick when you're about to bake it, and that will totally screw up your day. Using rice flour on your proofing cloth will really help your loaf not stick to it.

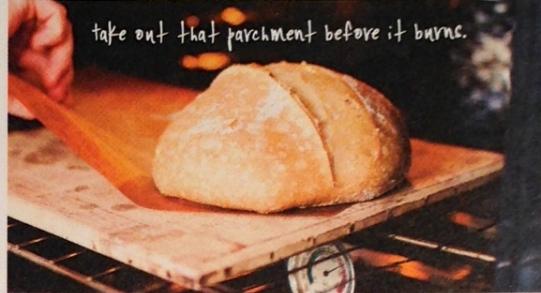
8. Let your loaf rise. Use your spatula or bench knife to scoop up the shaped loaf, and plop it into the basket, smooth-side down. If you want to bake the bread in 4 to 6 hours, let the loaf sit out somewhere in your kitchen. If you want to bake it anywhere from 6 to 24 hours later, stick the loaf in the fridge (or just outside if it's cool out—about 45°F/7°C).

9. Preheat your oven. Once your loaf has risen, put your baking stone or Dutch oven on the middle rack of your oven and preheat at 475°F/240°C for 30 minutes. Don't skimp on this—you want everything to get good and hot before the bread goes in.

10. Bake your bread. Put a piece of parchment paper on top of your loaf, followed by the large plate or pizza peel (if you have one). Flip the whole thing over so that your loaf comes out of the proofing basket and is sitting on the parchment. (Or carefully plop the loaf into your preheated Dutch oven, omitting the parchment.) Now use the razor blade to slash the top of that loaf with deft speed! (See the pointers on page 38.) Open up your oven, slide the loaf (and parchment) onto the middle of your baking stone, then carefully invert the pot or bowl over the loaf (or put the lid on the Dutch oven). Bake for 20 minutes, then CAREFULLY take the hot pot or bowl off your loaf (or take off the Dutch oven lid), and remove the parchment. Bake for another 15 minutes, and check the bread to see how it's looking. If it's not dark brown, give it another 5 to 10 minutes.

→ A very good question!

WHAT IS PARCHMENT PAPER? DO I HAVE TO USE IT?
Parchment paper helps your bread slide to and fro without sticking to anything. And it's safe to go into the oven, at least for a while, without catching on fire. That being said, you should take out your parchment paper when you uncover your loaf of bread, because there's a good chance that the paper will turn black if you leave it in the whole time. If you don't feel like using parchment paper, or don't have any, you can sprinkle your loaf with cornmeal or bread flour, which will help your loaf slide into the oven.



11. Let it cool, you impatient baker. Take out the bread and put it on a cooling rack or just lean it on its side so that air can move freely around it. Resist the very strong urge to eat it immediately—it's not done baking yet. Have some self-control!

BAKER'S PERCENTAGE

Bread flour	73%
Whole-wheat flour	27%
Water	73%
Yeast	About 0.1%
Salt	2.3%

Some Pointers on Slashing

Slashing your first loaf is probably going to be one of the most exciting moments of your life. It's the culmination of many, many hours of love and care, and it requires every bit of attention you can muster. It's also a great reminder that confidence goes a long way. When it's time to slash that loaf, just act like you know exactly what you're doing. Don't get all nervous that you're going to ruin the bread. You're not going to ruin the bread. You're going to help that loaf become the truest, fullest version of itself. That being said, here are a few things to keep in mind while you are totally showing that loaf who is boss:

- **USE A DOUBLE-EDGED RAZOR BLADE.**

These little guys are the best tools for the job. They're thinner and sharper than anything else (including single-edged razor blades), meaning that it's easier to get a smooth cut in your bread dough. To make a little handle for your razor, take a Popsicle stick or wooden coffee stirrer and slip it through the holes like that picture on the facing page. You will have to whittle down your Popsicle stick.

- **START SIMPLE.**

There are a million different ways to slash a loaf of bread, but let's take it easy. Start with a single slash down the middle of the loaf. This is the easiest to get right, and it will let the loaf get nice and big, even if you're a little sloppy.

- **GO FAST.**

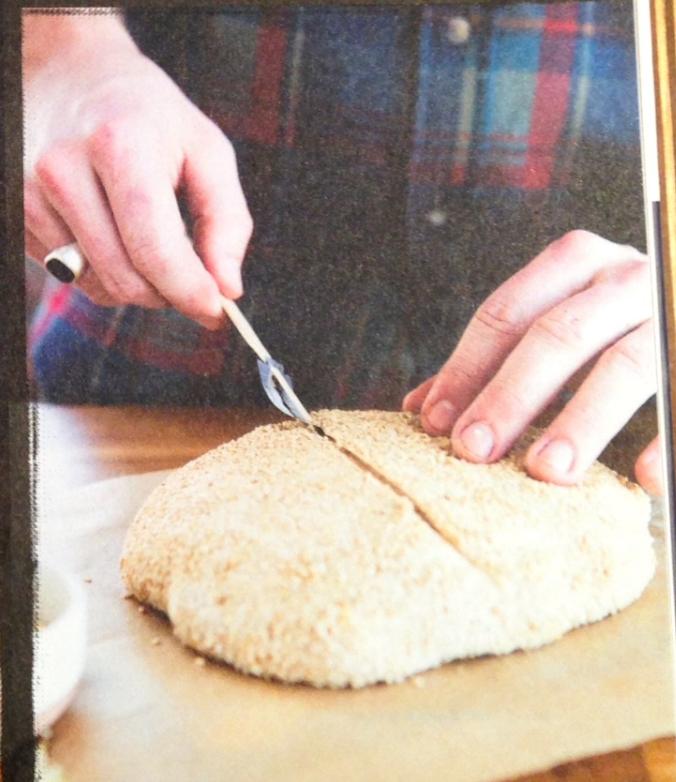
Lots of beginners get squeamish and drag the blade across the dough too slowly, perhaps worried that they're going to hurt the bread. Not only does the bread

understand, but it *wants* to be cut. So don't eff around, just cut the bread, and cut it quick.

- **CUT ABOUT $\frac{1}{4}$ IN/6 MM DEEP.**
- Don't worry about hitting exactly $\frac{1}{4}$ in/6 mm in depth, but shoot for right around there. If you go too deep or too shallow, the cut won't tear open and get sexy the way it wants to.

- **ANGLE THE BLADE.**
- By holding the blade at somewhere around a 45-degree angle to the dough, you're encouraging the cut to tear open and form an "ear." Everybody's different, but I think this is the sexiest thing that can happen on top of a loaf of bread.

- **CUT WITH A (SLIGHT) CURVE.**
- If your slash has a mild arc to it, this too will encourage the dough to rip open and form an ear. Don't go overboard here; the slightest of curves will do wonders for your slash.



MANY LOAVES IN ONE

You are actually in a very powerful place, young baker. Even though you've only been improving a single type of bread, you actually know how to bake many different types! Here's the thing—you can take this simple loaf of bread and add all sorts of stuff to it, thereby creating many different breads.

Let me be clear—*the following recipes are almost exactly the same as the previous recipe. All you do is add some new yummy stuff when you mix up your dough.*

Some additives (such as seeds) soak up water from the dough, while others (such as olives) add water to the dough, and others (such as cheese) don't really

do anything. We take this into account by letting thirsty additives like seeds soak in water before adding them to the dough. It's no big deal either way—remember that you're just baking bread. Here are a few ideas for adding goodies to your loaves, but don't stop there—you can add whatever you want. (Seriously, I've added stuff like cereal and chocolate peanut butter cups, and they've made delicious loaves of bread. Get wild.)

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

FOODSTUFF

sesame seeds, brown, unhulled
water
yeast (the kind in little packets, "active dry," is just fine)
whole-wheat flour
bread flour
sea salt, fine grind
cornmeal (optional)

TOOLS

measuring cups
measuring spoons
small bowl or jar
thermometer (optional)
big mixing bowl (at least 6 in/15 cm tall and 12 in/31 cm wide)
mixing spoon
2 plates
plastic wrap (optional)
small towel (at least 6 by 8 in/15 by 20 cm)
spatula or bench knife
proofing basket and cloth
baking stone and oven-safe pot or bowl (at least 6 in/15 cm tall and 12 in/31 cm wide) OR a Dutch oven
parchment paper (optional)
large plate or pizza peel
double-edged razor blade and handle
cooling rack (optional)

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SESAME

I loooove the flavor and texture that sesame seeds bring to this loaf. They're a little thirsty, so you've gotta let them soak in some water before adding them to your dough. Covering the outside of your loaf with sesame seeds will have all your friends swooning, for sure. I prefer this as a hearth loaf, but it makes a mean sandwich loaf as well, so follow your heart on that one.

Just so ya know, you'll need about $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups/
120 g of sesame seeds per loaf, to fill the inside
and coat the outside.

1. Gather your foodstuff and tools.

2. Toast the seeds. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C.
Spread the sesame seeds on a baking sheet and bake for
10 to 15 minutes, until they're golden-brown and smell
yummy.

What an excellent way
to start the day!

3. Make the s
bowl or jar:

toasted
sesame seeds

warm water
(100°F/38°C)

Everything else
shaping.

4. Make the p

yeast

cool water
(60°F/15°C)

whole-wheat
flour

5. Let it ferment
plastic wrap, at
13 to 18°C) for

6. Mix the do

lukewarm
water
(80°F/27°C)

bread flour

sea salt,
fine grind

seed soaker



*Excellent way
the day!*

3. Make the seed soaker. Measure and mix in a small bowl or jar:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
toasted sesame seeds	1/3 cup/ 55 g	2/3 cup/ 110 g	1 1/3 cups/ 220 g
warm water (100°F/38°C)	1/4 cup/ 60 g	1/2 cup/ 120 g	1 cup/ 240 g

Everything else is the same as last time, up until the loaf shaping.

4. Make the pre-ferment. Measure and mix:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
yeast	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	1 tsp
cool water (60°F/15°C)	1/2 cup/ 120 g	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g
whole-wheat flour	3/4 cup/ 105 g	1 1/2 cups/ 210 g	3 cups/ 420 g

5. Let it ferment. Cover both bowls with a plate or plastic wrap, and put them a cool place (55 to 65°F/13 to 18°C) for about 12 hours.

6. Mix the dough. Mix into your pre-ferment:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
lukewarm water (80°F/27°C)	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g	4 cups/ 960 g
bread flour	2 1/2 cups/ 375 g	5 cups/ 750 g	10 cups/ 1,500 g
sea salt, fine grind	2 tsp/ 12 g	4 tsp/ 24 g	2 Tbsp plus 2 tsp/ 48 g
seed soaker	all of it	all of it	all of it

7. Let the magic happen. Cover the bowl until the dough is doubled in size. (Remember: Rise at room temperature for 3 hours, then in the fridge for at least 3 hours or up to 4 days.)

8. Shape your loaf. Flour your counter and pour the dough out. Gently fold a corner up and over into the middle, and repeat around the entire piece of dough. Flip your loaf so that it's seam-side down.

9. Cover your loaf in seeds. Wet a small towel, gently wring it out, and spread it out on a plate. Spread 1 cup/165 g of the sesame seeds on the second plate. Gently lift your loaf and roll it in the wet towel to dampen. Carefully roll your wet loaf in the seeds, getting it completely covered.

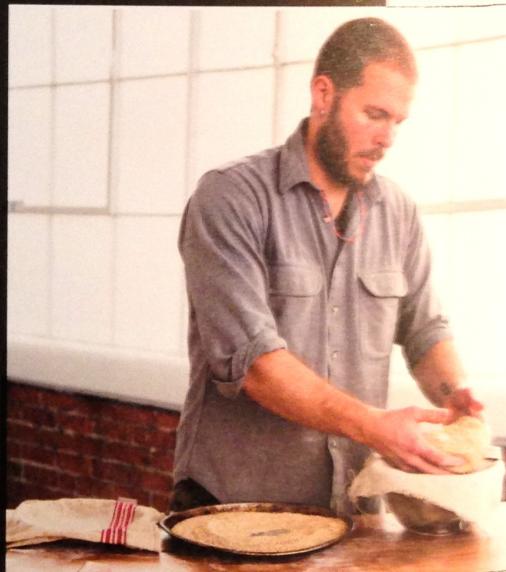
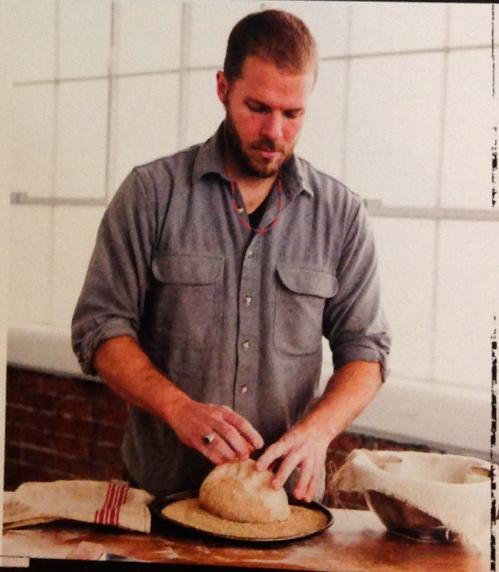
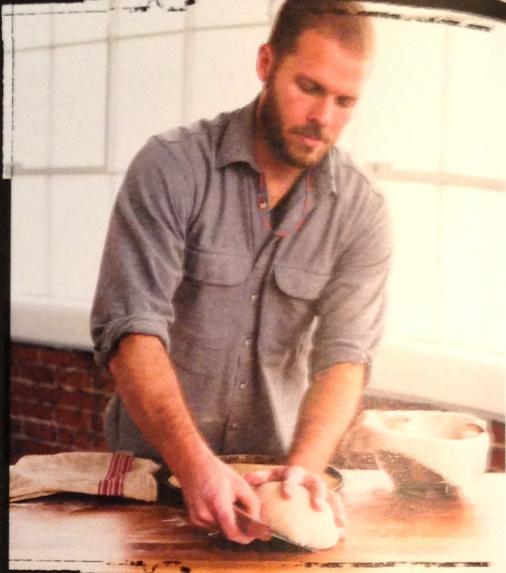
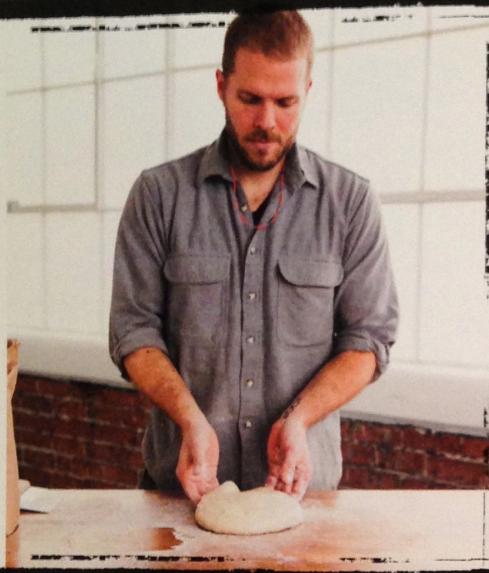
Do everything else the same as always!

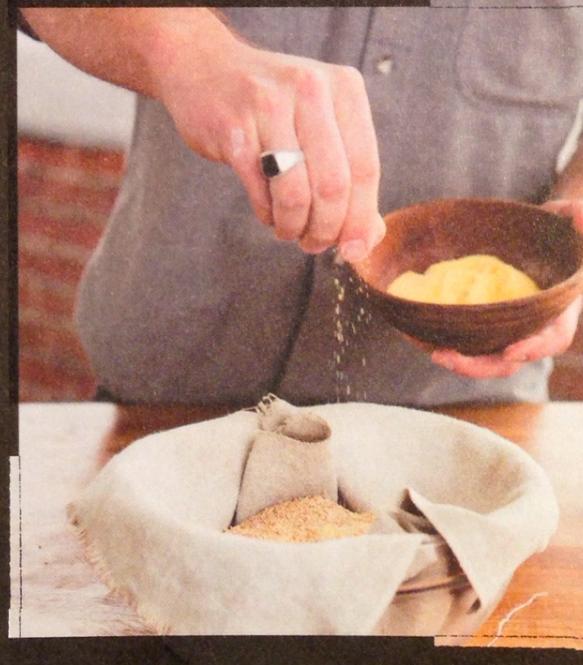
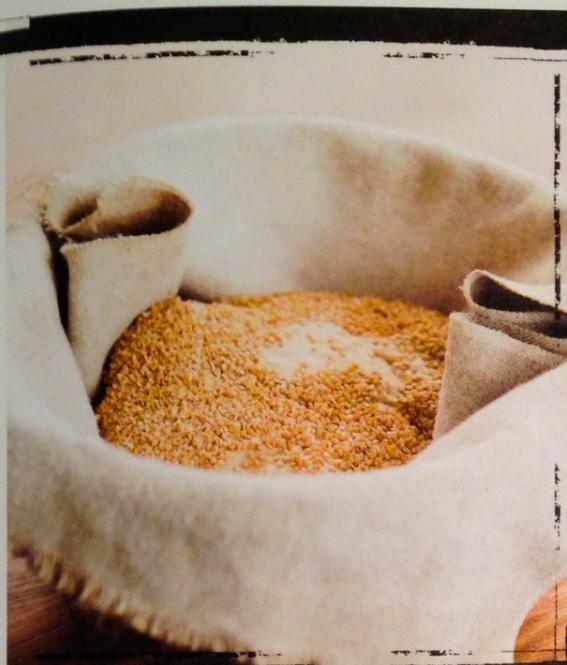
10. Let your loaf rise. Don't flour the proofing cloth! The seeds will stop the loaf from sticking. Plop your loaf into the cloth-lined basket, seam-side up. Let it rise until it's about 150 percent of its original volume—2 to 4 hours at room temperature, or up to 2 days in the fridge.

11. Preheat your oven. Once your loaf has risen, put your baking stone or Dutch oven on the middle rack of your oven and preheat at 475°F/240°C for 45 minutes.

12. Bake your bread. Sprinkle the loaf with cornmeal (or cover with parchment paper) and invert the proofing basket onto the large plate or pizza peel. (Or carefully plop the loaf into your preheated Dutch oven, omitting the parchment.) Slash the top with the razor, get it into the oven, and cover it with a pot or bowl (or put the lid on the Dutch oven). Bake for 20 minutes, uncover, and remove the parchment. Bake for another 15 minutes, and check the bread to see how it's looking. If it's not dark brown, give it another 5 to 10 minutes.

13. Then let it cool. Take it out of the oven and place it on a cooling rack, or lean it on its side so the air can move freely around it.





WHAT YOU'LL NEED

FOODSTUFF

yeast (the kind in little packets, "active dry," is just fine)
water
whole-wheat flour
pitted kalamata olives
lemons (for zesting)
fresh rosemary
bread flour
sea salt, fine grind
rice flour
cornmeal (optional)

TOOLS

measuring spoons
measuring cups
thermometer (optional)
big mixing bowl (at least 6 in/15 cm tall and 12 in/31 cm wide)
mixing spoon
plate or plastic wrap (to cover bowl)
sharp knife
zester
proofing basket and cloth
spatula or bench knife
baking stone and oven-safe pot or bowl (at least 6 in/15 cm tall and 12 in/31 cm wide) OR a Dutch oven
parchment paper (optional)
large plate or pizza peel
double-edged razor blade and handle
cooling rack (optional)

OLIVE

If only I had a quarter for every time I heard someone say, "Oh my god, olive bread is my favorite!" Olive bread seems to really strike a chord with folks, and this is the best recipe I've ever found. It's inspired by the world-renowned Tartine Bakery, here in San Francisco. They like to use an herb mixture (herbes de Provence), while I just opt for good, old-fashioned rosemary. Do what you will; the olives and lemon zest, together

with whatever herbs you choose, will get you invited to every dinner party in town.

Just so ya know, for up to 2 loaves, 1 lemon will do, but for 4 loaves you'll need 2 lemons.

1. Gather your foodstuff and tools.
2. Make the pre-ferment. Measure and mix:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
yeast	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	1 tsp
cool water (60°F/15°C)	1/2 cup/ 120 g	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g
whole-wheat flour	3/4 cup/ 105 g	1 1/2 cups/ 210 g	3 cups/ 420 g

3. Let it ferment. Cover the bowl with a plate or plastic wrap, and put it in a cool place (55 to 65°F/13 to 18°C) for about 12 hours.

4. Prepare the olives, lemon zest, and rosemary. I like to use kalamata olives, but you can use whatever kind you like, so long as they don't have pits in them. About 1/3 cup/45 g will do for one loaf of bread. Coarsely chop the olives with a sharp knife. Use a zester to get the zest of about half of a medium-sized lemon; you should have about 1/2 tsp, firmly packed, for each loaf. Mince some fresh rosemary.

5. Mix the dough. Mix into your pre-ferment:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
lukewarm water (80°F/27°C)	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g	4 cups/ 960 g
bread flour	2 1/2 cups/ 375 g	5 cups/ 750 g	10 cups/ 1,500 g
sea salt, fine grind	2 tsp/ 12 g	4 tsp/ 24 g	2 Tbsp plus 2 tsp/ 48 g
olives, coarsely chopped	1/3 cup/ 45 g	2/3 cup/ 90 g	1 1/3 cups/ 180 g
lemon zest	1/2 tsp, firmly packed	1 tsp, firmly packed	2 tsp, firmly packed
fresh rosemary, minced	1 tsp	2 tsp	4 tsp

6. Let the magic happen. Cover the bowl and let it sit until the dough has about doubled in volume. Rise at room temperature for 3 hours, then in the fridge for at least 3 hours or up to 4 days.

7. Shape your loaf. After the dough has completed its bulk rise, flour your counter and pour the dough out. Gently fold a corner up and over into the middle, and repeat around the entire piece of dough. Flip your loaf so that it's seam-side down while you prepare your proofing basket. Dust your proofing cloth with rice flour, line the proofing basket with the cloth, and use a spatula or bench knife to plop the loaf into the basket, seam-side up.

8. Let your loaf rise. Do what's convenient for you, either letting the loaf sit out on the counter or sticking it in the fridge.

9. Preheat your oven. Once your loaf has risen, put your baking stone or Dutch oven on the middle rack of your oven and preheat at 475°F/240°C for 45 minutes.

10. Bake your bread. Sprinkle the loaf with cornmeal or cover with parchment paper, and invert the proofing basket onto the large plate or pizza peel. (Or carefully plop the loaf into your preheated Dutch oven, omitting the parchment.) Slash the top with the razor, get it into the oven, and cover it with a pot or bowl (or put the lid on the Dutch oven). Bake for 20 minutes, uncover, and remove the parchment. Bake for another 15 minutes, and check the bread to see how it's looking. If it's not dark brown, give it another 5 to 10 minutes.

11. Once it's done, let it cool on a cooling rack, or lean it against something so the air can move around it. Then surprise your neighbor with your new, hot loaf.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

FOODSTUFF

raisins (whatever kind you like!)
water
yeast (the kind in little packets, "active dry," is just fine)
whole-wheat flour
bread flour
sea salt, fine grind
cinnamon, ground

TOOLS

measuring cups
measuring spoons
small bowl or jar
thermometer (optional)
big mixing bowl (at least 6 in/15 cm tall and 12 in/31 cm wide)
mixing spoon
2 plates or plastic wrap (to cover bowls)
oil or nonstick spray
loaf pan (about 8 by 4 in/20 by 10 cm)
aluminum foil
towel or pot holders
cooling rack (optional)

CINNAMON RAISIN

Who doesn't like cinnamon raisin toast? Jerks, that's who. I'm kidding, but really, cinnamon raisin bread is so gosh darn delicious, especially when it's toasted up real nice, with some melted salty butter on top. This is about as pure a cinnamon raisin loaf as you can get—no added sugar or fat here, just flour, water, salt, cinnamon, and raisins. I like to do this one as a sandwich loaf, but you can go hearth loaf style, if that suits your fancy. Raisins are thirsty, so you've gotta take this into account and let them soak in water for a while before adding them to your dough, then drain them of the pesky water that didn't feel like getting soaked up.

1. Gather your foodstuff and tools.

2. Make the raisin soaker. Measure and mix in a small bowl or jar:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
raisins	1/2 cup/ 70 g	1 cup/ 140 g	2 cups/ 280 g
warm water (100°F/38°C)	1/2 cup/ 120 g	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g

Everything else is the same as last time.

3. Make the pre-ferment. Measure and mix:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
yeast	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp	1 tsp
cool water (60°F/15°C)	1/2 cup/ 120 g	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g
whole-wheat flour	3/4 cup/ 105 g	1 1/2 cups/ 210 g	3 cups/ 420 g

4. Let it ferment. Cover both bowls, and put them in a cool place (55 to 65°F/13 to 18°C) for about 12 hours.

5. Drain the raisin soaker. Pour off the excess water from your raisin soaker.

6. Mix the dough. Mix into your pre-ferment:

	1 LOAF	2 LOAVES	4 LOAVES
lukewarm water (80°F/27°C)	1 cup/ 240 g	2 cups/ 480 g	4 cups/ 960 g
bread flour	2 1/2 cups/ 375 g	5 cups/ 750 g	10 cups/ 1,500 g
sea salt, fine grind	2 tsp/ 12 g	4 tsp/ 24 g	2 Tbsp plus 2 tsp/ 48 g
cinnamon, ground	2 tsp	4 tsp	2 Tbsp plus 2 tsp
raisins, drained	all of them	all of them	all of them

7. Let the magic happen. Cover the bowl and let it sit until the dough has doubled in volume.

8. Shape your loaf. Oil or spray your loaf pan. Sprinkle flour on your counter, and pour the dough onto it. Sprinkle a little flour on top of the dough, gently roll it into a log, and plop it into the pan, seam-side down. Oil the top and cover with aluminum foil, making sure there's room for the loaf to rise.

9. Let your loaf rise. Do what's convenient for you, either leaving it on your counter or putting it in your fridge.

10. Preheat your oven. Once your loaf has risen, put a rack at the middle height in your oven, and preheat at 475°F/240°C for 45 minutes. Take the loaf out of the fridge while the oven is preheating. (If you're making a hearth loaf, you can leave it in the fridge until it's time to bake.)

11. Bake your bread. Slide that loaf into the hot oven, and bake for 20 minutes, then carefully remove the aluminum. Bake for another 15 minutes, and check the bread to see how it's looking. If it's not dark brown, give it another 7 minutes.

12. Let it cool. Use a towel or pot holders to take the bread out of the pan (if it sticks in the pan, use a spatula or butter knife to gently loosen it). Leave the bread on a cooling rack or lean it against something so air can flow around it while it cools. It's best to let it cool for an hour or more before eating it.

Bread dough likes to relax,
just like you, so don't go
rushing it, you hear?