

Bread

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WELCOME

Once a week, Malin Elmlid pulls her sour-dough starter out of the refrigerator, refreshes it and bakes some bread. Just like you and I, actually. But what happens after the bread comes out of the oven turns her weekly ritual into something special. Malin doesn't keep the bread and enjoy it herself.

She doesn't sell it either. Instead, she sends a note to her tribe of social media followers and mailing list subscribers, and invites them to come and trade something of their own for a loaf of her bread. Money isn't an option, but other than that Malin is open to suggestions. Often, barters are done for ingredients that she later uses for making some more bread. Sometimes, Malin has received plane tickets and fancy meals.

Yet, what she talks the most fondly about are the many stories traders share with her as they make the exchange. What started with a goal of making great bread has turned into a project that is all about people and communication.

"Bread is a communication tool that people understand", Malin says.

As a tool for communication, bread has an amazing power to connect people from

very different backgrounds and cultures and give them something shared to talk about and to experience together. Everyone has their own stories and memories about their mothers baking the bread, their fathers heating big ovens, themselves buying the bread from the neighborhood boulangerie.

As we can see in this magazine as well as the many groups of bakers formed on Facebook and Google+, bread is a common language that brings people together.

Good bread, bread with a story, is something that will bring joy to the dark nights of autumn by bringing people together to the same table, sharing stories and experiences in peaceful chatter and community.

What this world needs right now is more of breaking bread together. Breaking bread and listening to the other's stories, hopes and dreams.

Are you willing to do this?

But in this magazine, we don't stop there. This spiritual aspect is important and I would join Peter Reinhart in saying that "I love myth and romance and, in fact, think that bread is the perfect mythic symbol to explain the meaning of life." but

in day to day life, most of the time, bread is quite simply a lot of fun to make.

For me, experimenting with formulas and ingredients is one of the great joys of life and so, I want to encourage everyone to experiment, to experience the joy of learning and finding new successes, to make mistakes and to learn from them.

Life is better when it's full of play and learning. And you seem to agree.

Earlier this summer, I asked you about what you wanted to read about in the magazine. You responded, sending me tons of great ideas, all of which are now written down and waiting to be explored in this and future issues (Thank you! It's great to see that you really care about great bread and want to be baking and experimenting). Out of all the ideas and feedback, one of the clearest requests was one for still more practical baking advice.

That's why, for this issue, I have collected a series of articles that should encourage you to do just that: We will explore baking with rye, taking a look at the flour, its properties and how it's used for different types of bread around the world. We'll learn how to bake great bread in a barbecue. We'll think about how to best fit bread making in your schedule.

That's a lot of practical bread making information. But the magazine wouldn't be complete without people, which is why we can never make an issue without presenting bakers doing great work: In this issue, you'll meet Samuel Fromartz who just published a great new book for amateur bakers, Malin Elmlid and her Bread Exchange, as well as New Zealand's Bread Man and Master-Chef 2013 winner Aaron Brunet. All inspiring people who are all about good living and sharing bread with their communities.

I hope you will have a great time with the magazine and following it, an even better time baking bread and exploring the endless possibilities that the autumn's harvest brings to you.

Bake, learn, share, and enjoy life.

And — as usual — if you have anything you'd like to talk to me about, feel free to [send me email](#).

Thanks for reading, and happy baking!

Jarkko



THE BREAD EXCHANGE

Words: JARKKO LAINE

Photos: MALIN ELMLID, KATRIN WEBER and MIRJAM WÄHLEN

Question: What do a twenty-two course dinner, a child's drawing, and a guitar lesson have in common?

Answer: They are all items that people have traded for a loaf of Malin Elmlid's sourdough bread.

It's a beautiful sourdough bread: aesthetically pleasing, slowly fermented, using high quality ingredients and no added yeast. The kind of bread we would call *real bread*.

But as great as all of that is, the true magic begins only after Malin pulls the bread out of the oven in her Berlin home.

She doesn't keep the bread herself, nor does she sell it for profit.

She trades it.

Once a week, the day after she bakes the bread, Malin notifies her group of bread lovers on her Facebook page and email newsletter and then waits for people to come and trade something for the bread.

Malin's project, [The Bread Exchange](#), began in 2008 as a way to distribute the results of her newly found obsession with sourdough bread baking.

"There is only so much my friends and neighbors can eat", Malin says.

Her trades are open for everyone and every trade gets accepted on a first come first served basis. Despite this open format, almost every one of the transactions has been a success in everyone's mind.

People are nice. Or maybe projects like this gather a special group of like-minded people who value other people's time and effort.

Either way, today, about 1,400 trades later, Malin still seems passionate about it and the connections she has built — one loaf of bread at a time.

After a few back and forth emails in the past year or two, this August, our schedules final-

ly matched, and I had the chance to chat with Malin about the project and the book it has lead her to write. Malin was just about to leave on a vacation and answered her phone at the Berlin airport, and so we talked all the way through her security control, only finishing the call as the plane was about to take off.

"Bread was the starting point for the project", Malin told me and continued to explain how everything started from the need to make good bread, but soon became something bigger than just bread: human connection, brought together by bread.

"Bread is like a carrier or communicator. It is a communication tool that people understand — it doesn't matter which religion, what class or heritage we are from. It's understood and valued by everyone." Malin says.

These days, when good bread is so hard to come by with, people value it, simultaneously as a staple and a luxury product.

"It puts bread on a quite high pedestal in that sense. I don't think I could have done this with any other food. It would not have been so understood. You can compare it with wine but wine cuts out the whole arabic islamic world. Bread is unique."

I feel this statement is important as it seems to be at the heart of what Malin is doing with her project: The Bread Exchange isn't an alternative to the monetary system and Malin isn't a hippie anti-capitalist advocating for the sharing economy. In fact, one



"I don't think I could have done this with any other food. It would not have been so understood. You can compare it with wine but wine cuts out the whole arabic islamic world. Bread is unique."

"You don't want to trade with your landlord. You don't want to trade with the gas company. You don't want to trade with... There's a lot of people out there you don't want to get involved with"

could argue that as a business professional with a degree in network management and a working background in the fashion industry, Malin is quite an unlikely person to start a bread bartering project.

She is in this for the connections, the communication and the stories that come from sharing bread with strangers. Maybe even to add a missing piece to the money-driven world of fashion business.

There is a time and place for money and Malin (or me, for that matter) certainly wouldn't want to make all her purchases through trades and barters, but, she says, "If you are only dealing with money, and everything gets valued in money, you are missing good people, you're missing good intentions and stories and honesty and connection."

"It's not a political statement or a protest against money in any way. But it's definitely added an aspect to my life."

With money comes anonymity, which, as Malin explains, can be a positive thing:

"You don't want to trade with your landlord. You don't want to trade with the gas company. You don't want to trade with... There's a lot of people out there you don't want to get involved with"

But at the same time, while money and the anonymity that comes with it make things easier, it lacks some of the direct involvement with people.

"If you can make 20% of your exchanges or purchases with people you want to work with and give what you have, you are getting so much more. Because people give more", Malin says.

This is why Malin always spends at least half a day doing the trades.

Every trader has a story to tell and she wants to be able to hear it: Why did he or she pick this item for trade? What is its meaning for the person?



Likewise, the bread tells its own story: the ingredients are mostly received in earlier trades in exchange for bread.

"My bread is a carrier of tales. Because tales, for me, are the most complex and fascinating flavour enhancer there is. And it is this fourth secret ingredient that makes it special; the tales from good people I have met along the journey." Malin writes on her web site.

Things get interesting as people stop thinking about money. Trades become gifts, and gifts, as we all know, are a lot more valuable than simple monetary transactions.

"A bad trade is when someone is just thinking about what a bread is worth and makes the trade based on that. Then you are back in the monetary system and you could just as well work with money." Malin says.

"When people don't think about money, and simply think about these two questions: 'What do I have that I want to share?' and 'What does this person need? How can I make something better for her?' then you have a good trade."

And that has nothing to do with the price.

"It's fun to tell about the incredible trades you get for one bread, but at the same time, I think the beauty at this is the variety and

diversity of the trades." Malin says and goes on to share one of her favorite trades: how a single mom from Berlin used the exchange as a way to teach her two children about the value of things and appreciation by passing the task of deciding what to trade to them.

"It was great to see what they had been thinking about. And that is for me just as an inspiring trade as when someone decides to fly me somewhere." Malin says.

People give what they can afford and what feels right for them, but in the end, what matters the most is the emotion and thinking behind the trade.

On her web site, Malin describes good trades as something made with dedication or bought with good intention. For example a good book, some quality food, or even a guitar lesson.

"When you just think about giving and with good intentions, there's always a good story to it."

And as we have already seen, stories is what this is all about.

Since the very first trades, Malin has been collecting stories about her exchanges and sharing them on her blog.

"It's so egoistic just doing this small bread ex-



Normally, Malin doesn't trade her bread in exchange for someone else's bread, but this one was an exception: a 100% rye sourdough bread brought to her by [a food blogger from Finland](#).

Originally from Sweden but having lived abroad for 14 years, Malin calls the dark rye bread her comfort bread:

"It's the kind of bread I was brought up with."

change in Berlin and wherever I travel. It's tied to me and that feels not fair", she says.

As the blog gathered more visitors and the word spread, the Bread Exchange also caught the attention of the American publishing company Chronicle Books (it's the same company that publishes Chad Robertson's Tartine books, by the way!). And so, out of the blue, in 2012, Malin got a message from the publisher, asking her if she was interested in writing a book.

"It wasn't my idea. I was working and just doing this for fun on my blog when I got an offer to write a book about it." Malin says.

A trip to San Francisco to meet with the publisher convinced her: she would be allowed to make the book in the same spirit of the bread exchange itself, and with full creative control up to the level of choosing the colors by picking them from a loaf of bread.

I'm still waiting for my copy — [the Bread Exchange book](#) will be published on October 7th — but what I found most interesting about it is that it seems like a true continuation of the Bread Exchange project: The book is a result of collaboration with photographers, designers and other great people sharing their work and skills without money switching hands.

Everything was done through exchanges and bartering. Bread was involved. Mutual help and transfer of knowledge was a big part of it.

"Doing this, I know you can definitely do it only once. Money has its advantages and I want to pay a fair price for people's work. But I couldn't really do it with this book because the authenticity of this project would not have come through if this would have been a paid thing." Malin says.

The book, just like the Bread Exchange itself is not a bread making book in the usual sense. Beginning with a larger section on bread, it quickly moves to talking



about the people, talking "about the people that I met and the places that I went to, what they brought to me rather than my bread being brought to them." Malin says.

"This book is about bread as a door-opener rather than it being a recipe book."

Malin says she wants her book to inspire people.

And as her example shows, trading without using money really has its advantages. So, maybe, if you are looking for ways to get rid of all that extra bread but don't want to turn it into a business, this could be your route. It has clearly worked for Malin.

You don't have to make your project open for everyone either: Malin suggests thinking of people you like and then trading in a closed circle. "People are always good at some things another person is not. We are all good at something." She says.

And the next time she is town, who knows, maybe you'll be trading with her...



This version of Malin's signature bread, "The Bread Exchange Sourdough" is colored black using charcoal she traded from Japan.



HOW TO FIT BREAD IN A BUSY LIFE

Words and illustrations: JARKKO LAINE

Photos: MARK FISCHER, JARKKO LAINE and ENRIC MARTINEZ

"I would love to bake bread,
but I don't have the time."

"Some day, when my daily rhythm slows down a little bit and I can focus again, I will bake bread."

If these sentiments sound true to you, you are not alone. The day-to-day lives we are expected to manage are getting more demanding every day, with more work and responsibilities being piled on top of the existing ones. It's easy to see baking bread — as much fun as it seems to be — as nothing but more task or requirement.

This is a shame because bread is a great way to unwind and get back some of the peace of mind we are all collectively lacking.

Luckily, making room for bread isn't impossible, or even all that hard.

Yes, great bread takes time. But with proper organization, a good choice of formula, and a little understanding of the theory behind it, anyone can make bread making a part of his or her life.

Quite often, home bakers pick a schedule from their favorite bread making book and then stick with it, without even thinking about alternative routines.

But maybe a different schedule will work better?

In the end, it all boils down to understanding how bread works — that is, more or less understanding fermentation — and then some experimentation to help you figure out what works best for your own daily routines.

But it helps to have some ideas to begin with.

To do this, I have created three personas or imaginary friends (who says only children can have imaginary friends?), given them each a life and then decided for them that they want to start baking bread.

On the following pages, you'll meet Matt, Susan, and Ellen and read my suggestions for how they could start baking bread and making bread a part of their lives.

Maybe one of these schedules will work for you — as is or with some fine tuning. Or even better: maybe the schedules will encourage you to experiment and come up with an ideal schedule of your own.

Let's get started! Beginning with Matt, a stay-at-home entrepreneur who reminds me a lot of myself!

MATT

A journalist turned stay-at-home dad, Matt likes to experiment with new things and loves how staying home with his two children he never quite knows what any given day will throw at him.

Jackie and Tom, ages four and three, still require a lot of his attention (solving quarrels, feeding them, making sure they wash up, taking them out to play), but in the past year, life has been getting easier, and so Matt is wondering...

At a party, some time ago, Matt tasted a delicious slow fermented bread his friend had made and since then, he has been thinking about trying to make some himself. Matt isn't sure how it would work out as his days are still a little random, but he is ready to give bread making a try.



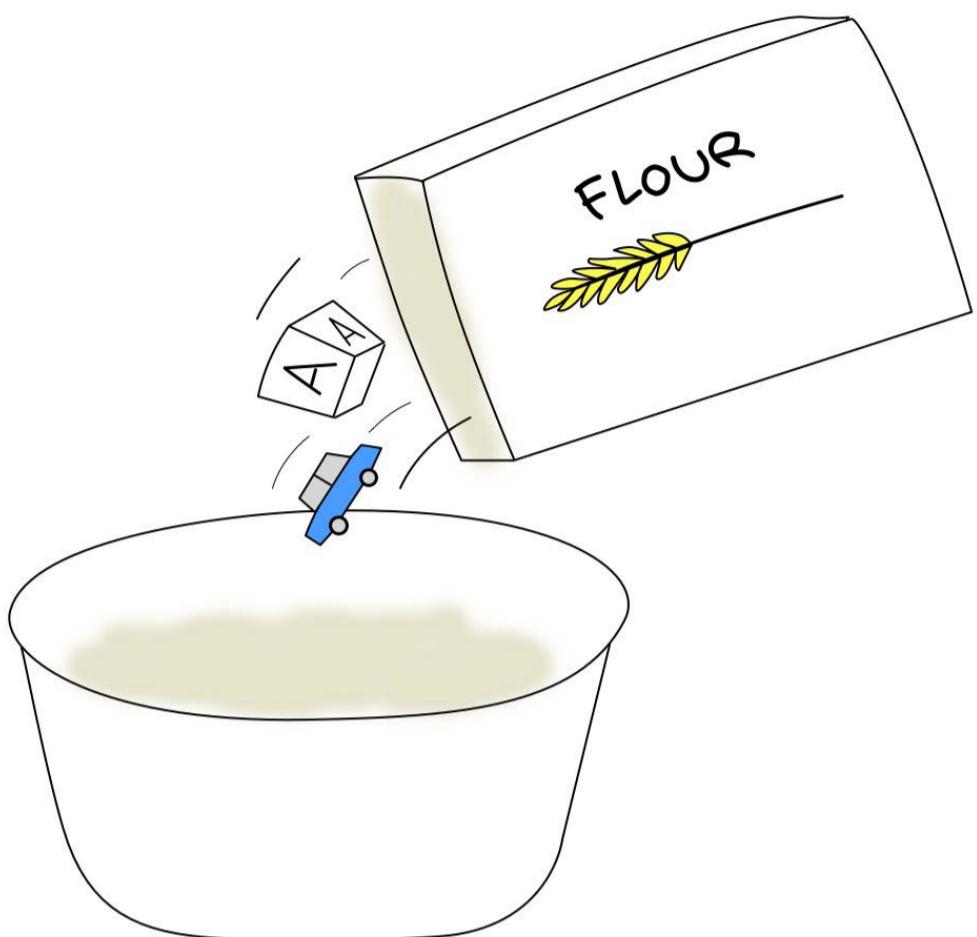
Matt is actually in a great position for establishing a manageable bread making routine. Or maybe routine is too strong of a word, but let's say, adding bread into his days at home, anyway.

All he needs is a way of making bread that can accommodate to the sudden changes in plans. Luckily, there is one — and it's the one that leads to the best of breads: sourdough.

As Andrew Whitley writes in his new book, [Do Sourdough — Slow bread for busy lives](#), "The sourdough baking process requires many hours, but not of your time".

Compared to the fast pace of the commercial yeast bread making process most people know as the typical one, sourdough in its slower rhythm is very forgiving and thus easier to adjust according to the baker's schedule.

In his book, Whitley proposes a very simple and straightforward yet delicious Russian rye sourdough. While that's a great idea (and I would encourage Matt to experiment with



rye when and if he feels like it — for example with the help of the rye articles in this magazine), my favorite is a loaf of white sourdough bread, so that's the recipe we'll be using here.

Bread making begins the night before Matt wants to bake his bread.

Matt's days are flexible and ever-changing, so this is not his only option but it's a process that is easily manageable — and you've got to start somewhere. The night before, Matt most likely has an idea about what's going to happen the next day: Is there shopping involved? Will he need to drop the kids to day care or to a friend's house? And so on. If the day seems too busy, Matt can just delay the bread making to the next day.

And all this time, his sourdough starter is sitting quietly in his refrigerator without him having to worry about keeping it alive.

Now, I know some of you will ask:
"What about the daily feedings?"

It's true that keeping the starter in the fridge will change its aroma a little compared to maintaining a starter at a warmer temperature and doing daily refreshes. However, this is a small price to pay for the ease of use that comes from having a starter waiting in the fridge and refreshing it only when it's time to bake.

"Sourdoughs don't need regular 'feeding'. They are not like pets or children, requiring three square meals a day to thrive. Unlike mammals, micro-organisms such as yeasts do not die when they run short of food. They slow down, naturally, and in some cases produce spores that can survive for years." Whitley writes.

Now, let's look at Matt's sourdough bread making schedule. The formula is below, and the roughly 24-hour process on the right.

With this schedule, Matt can safely add bread making into his life. And maybe at some point, even bake with his two children...

THE FORMULA

Starter:

50 g stored starter (from the fridge)
200 g bread flour
200 g water (warm)

Autolyse:

1 kg bread flour
700 g water

Final dough:

All of autolyse
300 g starter (save 50 grams for next bake)
20 g salt

MATT'S BREAD MAKING SCHEDULE

Monday, 10 P.M.

With nothing planned and still a few days left before his next deadline, tomorrow looks like a good day for some bread making.

Matt pulls his sourdough starter from the fridge and refreshes it by adding water and flour. Then, he leaves the starter on the kitchen counter and goes to bed.

As some of the starter will be saved and some always gets stuck in its bowl, it's important to make more than will be needed in the dough.

Tuesday, 8 A.M.

In the morning, the starter is well fermented, bubbling and ready to be used.

Right before preparing the breakfast, Matt measures the flour and water and mixes them until no dry lumps of flour remain. While the flour hydrates, he prepares breakfast and invites the family to the table.

Tuesday, 8:30 A.M.

Breakfast is over and Matt turns on the TV — this will give him a few minutes to work on the bread dough.

First, Matt takes about 50 grams of his starter and puts it back into his small starter jar which he then returns into the refrigerator. Then, he scoops the rest of his refreshed starter and mixes it with the flour and water mixture. To save time, Matt doesn't knead the dough but lets time do the work for him. He simply mixes it by hand until all ingredients have been evenly mixed.

He covers the dough, sets the alarm to go off in 30 minutes, and goes on with his day's work, switching between his kids, the writing, and some household chores.

Tuesday, 8:40 A.M. - 1 P.M.

For the next four hours, Matt can keep going through his daily routines, folding the dough with wetted hands every half an hour or so. It's a bit limiting as Matt can't really leave the house between folds, but still gives him a lot of free time to just hang out with the kids and get some work done.

Tuesday, 1 P.M.

In the early afternoon, Matt looks at the dough and notices that it has developed enough, nearly doubling in size. He shapes the breads and places them into proofing baskets which he leaves on the kitchen counter to get the fermentation going.

Tuesday 2 P.M.

The shaped loaves have been resting for half an hour and fermentation is getting up to speed. To slow down the process a bit, Matt places the breads in the fridge.

To bake the breads the next day rather than the same night, he would make this step a bit shorter and refrigerate the loaves already at 1:30 P.M.

Tuesday 8 P.M.

Matt turns on the oven. A peek in the fridge shows that the loaves are doing great.

Tuesday 9 P.M.

The oven is ready and Matt bakes the breads. As he cannot fit both loaves in the oven at once, he keeps the other one in the fridge while the first bakes and bakes the breads in a row.

Tuesday 11 P.M.

Bread is ready and Matt leaves it to cool on a wire rack at room temperature. The time for tasting the bread is not yet — that will be in the morning.



SUSAN

Susan is a project manager at a major software company. She works nine to five, Monday through Friday with an hour spent on commutes to work and back home (a time she likes to spend reading mystery novels) — on paper, at least. In addition to her daily work hours, she often takes work home with her.

Some of her most important customers are in China, and the best time for phone calls is when she has already made it home. Still, more or less, she has the time from six onwards to herself.

Susan is all for a healthy and natural lifestyle with some yoga and nice jogs in the neighborhood — and real bread is a part of the healthy diet that keeps her going.



Unlike Matt, Susan needs to be at the office during the day and cannot be expected to do stretches and folds to her dough every half an hour. Unless she has a very understanding boss and a group of coworkers who find it fun to see her work on her dough in between meetings and email messages¹, of course!

But even if the workplace isn't quite ready for baking at work yet, no worries: sourdough and slowing down fermentation by cooling the dough down will again be the key to making the bread routine work.

Sleep is important too, so instead of trying to fit everything in 24 hours and baking bread at night, I am suggesting her a slower two day process.

To fit everything to Susan's schedule, I have shuffled things a bit: instead of refreshing the starter in the evening, Susan does it first thing in the morning.

¹ If you have brought your bread making to work, I'd love to hear from you — [email me!](#)



SUSAN'S BREAD MAKING SCHEDULE

Wednesday, 7 A.M.

The bread making begins with refreshing the starter first thing in the morning, before Susan leaves to work.

The starter will be fermenting a bit longer than overnight, but in my experience this is all right at least when working on an all bread flour wheat starter. If the starter seems to be developing too fast, Susan can use cooler water to slow down the process.

Wednesday, 6 P.M.

During the day, while Susan works on her projects in the office, the starter is doing its work back at home, the dormant yeast cells getting back to life and getting the dough ready for her to come home to it.

At six o'clock, when Susan enters her kitchen, the starter is ready and she can mix the dough, saving 50 g of it for the next bake and then adding the flour and water in the mixture.

To save time, Susan skips the autolyse step and kneads the dough for ten minutes instead.

Wednesday, 6:40 P.M.

After the dough has been resting for 30 minutes, Susan sprinkles the salt and kneads the dough for 1 to 2 minutes to mix the salt thoroughly.

Then she shapes the dough into a ball and places it back into the lightly floured dough bowl which she places in the refrigerator to slowly ferment while she sleeps.

It's a long process, but the bread will be worth the wait!

Thursday, 6 A.M.

Before heading to work in the morning, it's time to shape the bread. Susan takes the dough out of the refrigerator, shapes the loaves, places them in proving baskets or baking tins and leaves at the kitchen counter for the time she spends on her morning routine to give the fermentation some time to get going.

Finally, just before leaving to work, she refrigerates the dough for the one last time.

Thursday, 6 P.M.

When Susan returns from home, it's time to bake the bread! Susan heats the oven, keeping the bread in the fridge while waiting.

Thursday, 7 P.M.

The oven is ready and Susan bakes the bread. Roughly 36 hours after starting the bread making process by refreshing her starter, Susan has a delicious loaf of fresh sourdough bread ready for dinner.

And while this took a long time, in the end, making the bread only required about 30 minutes of her active hands on work.

Not bad, don't you think?



ELLEN

Ellen works as a midwife at a big hospital a few miles from where she lives. The work is divided into three shifts: morning, evening and night, changing from week to week. After two decades, she is very good at what she does, but staying up through the night is just as taxing as ever.

When at home, Ellen makes sure here two teenagers do their homework and don't stay up too late. Her husband does his part of the household chores but still, after work and family, Ellen is often exhausted.

Ellen has always enjoyed baking and found it a good way to relax, but in the past weeks, she has noticed a new interest capture her imagination — "It's all those photos bakers keep posting on Instagram", she says.

With her schedule, Ellen thinks it might be hard to bake bread, but she would like to give it a try. What if she too could bake something as nice as all those home bakers she is following.

The first step in making bread making work for Ellen is the same as what I suggested to Matt and Susan: storing her sourdough starter in the refrigerator.

By placing the starter in the fridge and refreshing it only when she is about to bake bread, she can free herself of the daily routine of "feeding" the starter. This way, instead of her planning her schedule around the starter's readiness, she can plan the refreshes according to her changing schedule.

On the weeks when she works day shifts, she can follow a bread making schedule similar to Susan's. Evening shifts take a little tweaking, and on night shift days, she can bake bread by turning the timing upside down.

ELLEN'S BREAD MAKING SCHEDULE

Thursday, 8 P.M.

Before heading to work, Ellen refreshes her sourdough starter, covers it and leaves it on the kitchen counter.

Then she says good night to her children — one replying from behind her computer, the other barely lifting his nose from his book — and heads out the door.

Friday, 6 A.M.

Early in the morning, when she gets home from work, Ellen sees that her sourdough starter looks good. She feels tired but this won't take long.

Ellen takes about 50 grams of it and saves it for the next bake and then goes on to mix her dough, using cool water to slow down the fermentation just a little.

As she needs to get to sleep soon, she doesn't bother with stretches and folds but just kneads the dough for a few minutes and leaves it at room temperature to rise.

Friday, 9 A.M.

Even after all the years working night shifts, sleeping during the day doesn't come all that naturally to Ellen. She wakes up a few times during the day and even though she tries to go back to sleep, she might use these moments for a quick stretch and fold here and there.

If, on the other hand, she manages to sleep, she can just let the dough rise on its own.

Friday, Noon

A few minutes after noon, Ellen gives up on her attempts of staying asleep and gets up to find the dough ready to be shaped.

She shapes the bread and places them in proofing baskets or baking tins. Then she must make the choice of whether to finish the breads still on that same day or to refrigerate the shaped breads and bake them the morning after.

The choice depends mostly on Hannah's estimation on her starter's activity and the temperature in the kitchen. If she decides that the bread can be finished in time (this should be possible, in most cases), she may leave the loaves on to rest on the kitchen counter.

On the other hand, if she isn't quite sure, refrigerating them soon after shaping is the safer bet. This way, she can bake the breads first thing next morning as she returns from work.

Friday, 4 P.M.

Ellen pre-heats the oven.

Friday, 5 P.M.

Ellen bakes the bread. Still warm from the oven, she decides to take one of the loaves with her as she leaves for another night at the hospital...





FOCUS ON FLOUR: RYE

Words: JARKKO LAINE

Photos: JARKKO LAINE, DAVID HALE SMITH and JIM CHAMPION

It's amazing to think that the soft, dark rye bread I had for breakfast this morning could be a result of an accident.

I guess you could say that of every grain we grow today — or have ever grown — but in the case of rye, the species's success was even more unlikely. The early rye, which grows wild in central and eastern Turkey as well as the surrounding fertile area where agriculture was first invented, was considered a weed and thus encountered strong opposition. If the early farmers had had their say, there probably wouldn't even be a grain we now know as rye, or *secale cereale*.

Still in the first century, Roman author and philosopher Pliny the Elder described rye as "a very poor food and only serves to avert starvation."

Competing views about the history of rye and how it developed into a grain cultivated for its own sake contradict each other, making it hard to trace the history all the way back.

In the first century, Roman author and philosopher Pliny the Elder described rye as "a very poor food [that] only serves to avert starvation."

Grains of rye as old as 11,000 years have been discovered around the delta of the Euphrates river in Abu Huteira, Syria, suggesting that at least some early farmers experimented with growing rye. However, given the opposition that is clearly visible in later history, it's quite unlikely that this would be where rye developed into a foodstuff of its own right.

The early rye was considered a weed that thanks to its cross polluting abilities spread easily and grew in the same fields in between stalks of wheat and barley and was therefore hard to get rid of.

A theory suggests that the big break for rye came when agriculture spread towards northern Europe. Rye travelled along with wheat seeds, and then, faced with the harsher, colder climate and the weaker soil of the north, proved a winner. It survived the cold winter better than the winter wheat it was sown together with and pretty soon became the main cereal of the region.

The narrative makes sense, but who knows. What is clear however, is that at some point in history, rye became an important grain in the poorer, harsher region of the European north never gaining a similar success in the regions dominated by wheat and other finer flours.

Still at the beginning of the 20th century, roughly one third of the European population ate rye as their primary bread flour. In the middle ages, rye was so central to life in Finland that it was used as a currency¹. Rye, and bread together with it, were seen as valuable and eaten with the utmost respect.

Since then, however, the consumption of rye as human food has declined steeply. While loved in the regions where rye has become a part of the culture, most of the world always saw it as an inferior product compared to the soft, white bread made from rye's fine cousin, wheat, and gave up on rye as soon as the wheat product became affordable enough for them.

While a Finnish traveler will still tell you that a real 100% rye bread is what he misses from home, even in Finland, rye has been losing in popularity in its fight against the white French style breads.

Today, rye is the least popular of cereals, totaling to only 1.5% of the total cereals cultivated every year. 95 percent of it is grown in Northern Europe with Russia, Germany, Poland and the Scandinavia being the biggest producers. In Finland, only a little rye is produced anymore — in fact, despite the country's reputation as a big rye country, we have to import rye to satisfy the population's need for rye products. In fact, in most of the world — something I as a Finnish bread lover find hard to understand — rye is considered a fod-

¹ According to a document from 1474, two pounds of rye was considered the equivalent to 1,000 bricks.





der crop, with only one third of it being used for human consumption.

While it's hard to change people's minds on their food preferences, recent studies show that with rye, we probably should be trying to do just that: The grain contains the most fiber in any grain or vegetable as well as many bioactive compounds with various health benefits. As always when it comes to nutrition research, it is hard to say for sure, but researchers have found that including wholegrain rye breads in one's diet has a beneficial effect on adult type diabetes, heart diseases as well as some hormonal cancers such as breast cancer and prostate cancer.

In her book "Ruis — suomalainen ihmeruoka" (Rye — The Finnish Superfood), Ulla Rauramo writes: "Rye might be a life ring for the entire Western diet."

The word "rye" is derived from the Proto-Germanic word "rugiz" (in old English, it was called ryge).

Other languages that use a similar word based on the same origin include among others German ("Roggen"), Swedish ("råg"), Finnish ("ruis"), Lithuanian ("rugys") and Russian ("ржь, роз'").



RYE IN BREAD MAKING

But you're not reading BREAD for health benefits, are you? Even if health is important to you, you are reading the magazine for ideas you can try in your bread baking. And so, instead of going any deeper into the history and health benefits of this dark gray grain, it's time to jump in and start making some rye bread.

The first, and easiest way to approach baking with rye — at least for bakers already familiar with wheat bread — is to take your regular bread recipe and replace some of its flour with rye.

When the proportion of rye is small enough (less than 50% of the flour, according to Jeffrey Hamelman), you can make your dough without changing much of your methods and bread making process at all.

The main change is that because of its high fiber content and the presence of a substance called pentosans, rye is "thirstier" than wheat and absorbs more water than wheat. So, when modifying a recipe by including rye, you will need to increase the amount of water according to the amount of rye added.

Examples of breads like this include the New York Deli Rye (common in the USA, with about 15% rye), the French Pain de Campagne (rye percentage varying from 15 to 30 — and sometimes made without any rye at all).

Another French rye bread is *Pain de Méteil* at just the border line of 50% rye and 50% wheat. We'll be baking this bread in just a few pages...

When you add even more rye and move closer to 100% rye than 100% wheat, the traits of the rye flour start to dominate the dough and you'll have to think about your bread making differently.

The biggest difference is that when making rye bread, you cannot rely on

"When the proportion of rye is small enough (less than 50% of the flour, according to Jeffrey Hamelman), you can make your dough without changing much of your methods and bread making process at all."

Around the world, the types of rye flours sold vary a bit, but usually you can find wholegrain or dark rye flour (sometimes called pumpernickel flour) as well as lighter versions with more of the bran taken out.

Some artisan mills (like Vääksyn mylly in Finland) also sell wholegrain rye flours at different levels of coarseness.

the very basis of wheat bread: gluten. Therefore the goal as well as the methods you use to get there must be different from that in making wheat bread.

"Rye flour contains gliadin as well as the protein glutelin (which is similar to glutenin). However, due to the presence of pentosans, gluten formation is not possible." Hamelman writes in his bread bible, [Bread: A Baker's Book of Techniques and Recipes](#).

Pentosans not only compete with glutelin and gliadin with moisture, thus preventing the formation of gluten, but also make the dough fragile and sticky.

The practical implication from this is that when working with a dough high in rye, you need to handle it gently.



*"Baking with rye is a world of its own, waiting to be explored.
Have fun with it!"*

As kneading a rye dough won't help develop a gluten net anyway, it's better to not knead it any longer than until all ingredients have been thoroughly mixed. Similarly, when shaping the bread, you need to be careful so you don't break the pentosans and turn the dough into a sticky mess.

Another element to take into account when working with a dough with a high percentage of rye is that rye has more soluble sugars than wheat. Sugars are food for fermentation and so a dough made with rye ferments faster than one made with wheat.

I might be partial because of my cultural heritage, but I'd say that while rye bread can be made with a yeasted dough, the real magic and flavor of rye comes from using a rye sourdough starter.

And it's not just the taste.

The acidity in the sourdough starter also helps counter one more obstacle from rye bread making: the high amount of amylase enzymes in rye flour.

"[the amylases] have an opportunity to wreak considerable havoc by breaking down the starch into sugar and preventing the starch from forming a well-structured crumb." Hamelman writes.

Long story short, use a sourdough starter and you'll be alright!

EXPERIMENT

And now the fun part: action.

If you are new to rye, I suggest you start with something simple such as replacing 20 percent of your bread flour with rye. As an example of something like this, you can look at the New York Deli style bread recipes in Hamelman's Bread or Peter Reinhart's classic, [The Bread Baker's Apprentice](#). Or maybe your variation will be a Pain de campagne with some rye?

But don't stop there.

In this magazine issue, you'll find a recipe with 50% rye and 50% wheat. This recipe (Pain de Méteil) produces a beautiful, rather dense but still easily approachable rye bread with a delicate but clear taste of rye and not too much sourness.

Continue varying the percentage of rye and experiment with everything from 15 to 100 percent to notice how the percentage affects the dough and how rye differs from wheat and other flours.

If you are looking for more things to experiment with, here are some:

Try changing the amount of fermented dough in the final mix.

Use liquids other than water (beer, dry cider, buttermilk).

Mix in some caraway seeds, walnuts, soaked grains, or flaxseed — they are all common additions to rye breads.

Test different baking times: one of my Finnish favorites is jälkiunileipä, a dark, 100% rye bread baked slowly in a oven with a falling temperature. Traditionally, this was the last batch baked in a wood-fired oven, but you can replicate the effect in your home oven by keeping an eye on the temperature and... experimenting.

Baking with rye is a world of its own, waiting to be explored. Have fun with it!



MAKE YOUR OWN RYE SOURDOUGH STARTER

Words and photos: JARKKO LAINE

While it is possible (and not uncommon at all¹) to make rye bread with commercial yeast or a simple yeasted preferment, the way to truly experience rye's flavor and magic is with the help of a sourdough starter.

Traditionally, the starter was treated as a special, almost magical, life-giving element and its care was surrounded with spells and superstition: In Finland, the bowl used for mixing the rye dough was washed only once a year so that it would keep the power of the rye starter. If the starter lost its power, the mother of the house had to resort to spells.

As Ulla Rauramo writes in her rye book, this was done by collecting sourdough from three different neighbors and mixing them all together. If even this didn't help, as the last resort, housewives would take some old bread from a beggar and soak it into your dough...

Today, we can laugh at all of this, but in all honesty, there is still too much su-

perstition surrounding the process of creating a sourdough starter.

Things like looking for a rye bread you like and using it to start your own dough or needing to create the starter in a specific environment and location.

None of those things are necessary — and there is nothing hard about creating a sourdough starter.

So, let's get started.

If you already have a trusty sourdough starter made with wheat (wholemeal or bread flour, either goes), use it: You can very easily transform a wheat starter into a rye starter by taking a tablespoon or two of your wheat starter and refreshing it with rye flour and water (at a ratio of 1 part flour to 1.5 parts water, or a 150% hydration).

If however, you are starting from scratch, on the following pages, you'll find illustrated step-by-step instructions to help you make a rye sourdough starter in roughly four days.

1 For example, the iconic French country bread, Pain de Campagne is these days often made with yeast rather than sourdough starter.

INSTRUCTIONS

The amount of sourdough starter you create at first is up to you. You don't need all that much flour and water as even a small amount of starter will multiply at the last refresh before you mix your final dough. Also, rye is very active and fermentation should start quickly.

This is why you could very well start with as little as 25 grams of good, organic (stone-ground if you can find it) wholegrain rye flour. Or if it's easier for your calculations, double the amount. It's not strict at all. What matters is the consistency of the starter: we are looking for a porridge-like slur, almost like a batter made of rye and water.

The process below is adapted from Andrew Whitley's instructions in [Do Sourdough](#). In the spirit of keeping waste to the minimum, we won't discard any of the starter, but instead just keep adding flour and water to it as days go by and the fermentation gets going.

* *



Day 1:

Mix 1 part rye flour with 2 parts water. Stir and leave to rest at room temperature, lightly covered so some air can flow to the container.

Andrew Whitley suggests mixing with a finger, saying that "[t]here is good evidence that one of the key sourdough bacteria, *Lactobacillus sanfranciscensis*, isn't present in flour but gets into starters through contact with the hands of bakers."



Day 2:

No clear signs of fermentation yet, apart from a few bubbles — and the smell, which at this point isn't very pleasant at all.

Don't worry about that, just add 1 part rye flour and 2 parts water to the mixture, stir with your finger and leave to ferment.



Day 3:

Fermentation is speeding up. Before adding the flour and water, you'll notice a foam forming on top of the starter. The smell is probably still a bit off, but it's getting closer to the sweet and sour you expect from your rye sourdough starter

Add 1 part rye flour and 2 parts water. Stir, cover and leave to ferment.



Day 4:

Almost there. Judging the readiness of the starter isn't always easy, but if you feel that the starter might actually be ready, give it a go and try making some bread with it (just flip to the next page for some recipes). Then you'll know.

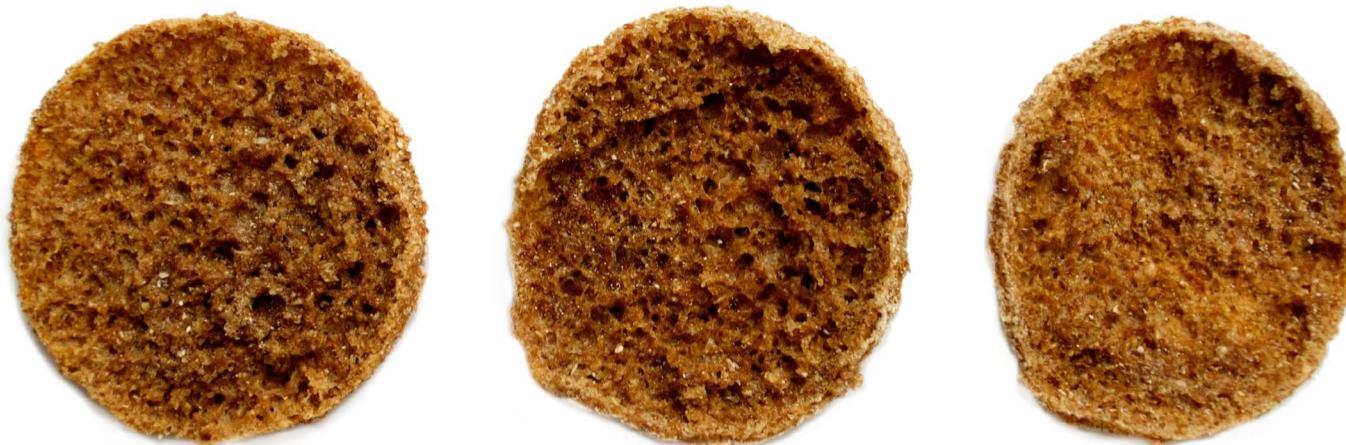
If you don't think it's ready, keep adding flour and water. If you run out of space in the jar (that happened to me as I was making this starter), just pour the starter into a bigger container and continue the refreshments there.

Again, there are no clear rules, but if you like a less liquid consistency, you may want to make the next refreshment by adding just flour and no water. This will lead to a starter that looks like the one on the right.



EASY 100% RYE COINS

Words and photos: JARKKO LAINE



When I started putting together this collection of articles about rye in bread making, I knew I had to find a new take on the 100% rye bread. I had already mentioned the traditional Finnish 100% rye loaf (*ruislimppu*) a few times in different magazine issues so I didn't want to go back to it again. At the same time, I wanted to include a bread that was typically Finnish and easy to make.

After a series of successes and failures as I experimented with different 100% rye bread recipes and ideas, I landed on these rye coins that are a product somewhere in between a crisp bread and a traditional Finnish *reikäleipä* (bread with a hole).

So, very quickly, these breads became my two sons' favorites. And mine as well — I can see myself baking these rye coins again and again for a long time in the future: The long fermentation gives them a sweet and strong aroma of rye and the thin structure makes the bread light and easily approachable. Thanks to their thin round shape, they

are also a handy snack that fit a lot of butter.

Also, instead of going stale, as they age, they simply dry — and in my opinion become even better.

* *

The formula for this bread is a simplified version of a high hydration rye sourdough, similar to the dough used in Finland for making the rye "*reikäleipä*". The wetness of the dough is surprising at first, and you will have to handle it gently and quickly, but it also gives the bread its proper internal structure as well as helps with giving it some lightness.

The first time I saw bakers make bread with a dough of this type was two years ago as I visited the baking brothers at Viipurilainen kotileipomo¹. I don't know their exact

¹ For the full story about my visit to Viipurilainen *kotileipomo*, check out [our Flour issue from 2012](#)

formula, but a wet dough quite like this one was rolled out with the help of a machine that also stamped the breads into big flat rounds about the size of a frisbee. When the bread was cut, one of the bakers quickly slipped a metal peel under it and transferred the bread to a heavily floured couche for its final rest.

With more dough coming out of the machine at a fast speed, there was no time to stop. The breads had to be moved from the conveyor belt without hesitation.

Luckily for us, when working in our kitchens, we are in no hurry. The dough is wet, but with a heavy flouring of the table and gentle but decisive moves, it's surprisingly easy to handle.

You will be tempted to add more flour, and that's OK: If the dough feels too wet at first, go ahead and add some flour, but as you gather your courage, make sure to try reducing flour to the amount suggested in the formula.

When you have baked these rye coins, make sure to give them some time to cool before you get to eating them. Sure, this is what you're supposed to do with all kinds of breads, but rye breads benefit from patience even more than your regular white breads. It's amazing how the flavor still develops after the bread has come out of the oven and gets deeper and more complex.

Eat the coins the same day, after they have cooled for a few hours, when they are still soft. Or leave them on a wire rack for a day or two and enjoy a terrific rye crispbread. That's how I like them best.

The rye coins are rather easy to make, require very little work, and are quick to bake, so they are an easy way to fall in love with 100% rye bread baking. Also, seeing the bread puff in a pita-like manner in the oven is a fun event to watch, so let's get started!

"Luckily for us, when working in our kitchens, we are in no hurry. The dough is wet, but with a heavy flouring of the table and gentle but decisive moves, it's surprisingly easy to handle."

PRE-DOUGH / STARTER

On the night before you want to bake the rye coins, start by creating a batter-like pre-ferment using your rye starter¹. This process is based on a ripe rye starter at about a 150% hydration (like the one created on pages 36-39). The hydration of the starter doesn't matter much as we are using only little of it to get the pre-ferment going.

You can even use a dried starter, in which case you'll need to give it more time to get going.

Ingredients	Quantity	Baker's %
Water	500 g	100%
Dark rye flour	250 g	50%
Ripe rye starter	50 g	10%

Mix all ingredients in a bowl big enough to hold the final dough (in the next step, we'll just be adding flour and salt), cover and leave to rest at room temperature overnight (or for about 8 to 10 hours).

When you come back to the dough, it should be frothy and full of bubbles. Smell the batter and you'll notice a sweet, sour note of fermented rye.



¹ Notice that the bakers' percentages in this formula are calculated based on the final dough and will not add up properly when looking just at the pre-dough.

FINAL DOUGH

Once the pre-ferment is ready, it's time to add the rest of the ingredients and mix the final dough.

Ingredients	Quantity	Baker's %
Pre-ferment	All of it	
Dark rye flour	250 g	50%
Salt	10 g	2%

This is a very wet dough and therefore there is no use kneading it. Just stir with a spoon until everything is evenly mixed. Then leave the dough to rest.

About two hours later, the dough is ready to be shaped. Looking at the dough, you might not notice much difference: the dough has domed a little. But if you put a spoon into the dough, you'll see a big difference: the dough is full of bubbles.

When you scrape some dough with your spoon, you can even hear the fermentation!

When shaping the breads, the one important thing is to be generous with flour. This, together with a very gentle touch will make sure the dough doesn't stick on your table, your hands or your rolling pin.

So, first, flour the table with a thick layer of coarse rye flour. Then, with the help of a spoon, take some of the dough onto the flour (see next page for a series of photos). Sprinkle more flour on top and gently pat the dough to flatten it a little.

Now, using a rolling pin, roll the dough (very gently) until it is about 5 mm thick. The dough is so soft that you won't even need to press the rolling pin at all.

Then, use a cookie cutter (a glass works too) to cut rounds out of the dough and place them on a baking pan covered with a baking sheet. You may be able to lift the breads using your hands or with the cutter itself. If that doesn't work out, use a metal spatula!





When you cut the dough, you'll notice that there is a lot of dough left from around the breads. To avoid excess, you can collect the remainders into a ball and roll it out again. This adds some flour to the dough and in the end, these breads will not puff quite as beautifully — but they'll be alright.

Another option is to cut the dough into squares instead of rounds... Then you'll just have to think of a new name to call them instead of coins.

Cover the baking sheets with a cloth and leave the coins to rest for one to two hours at room temperature.

While the coins are resting, heat the oven to 250°C (482°F). Bake for 15 minutes.

After taking the breads out of the oven, as soon as the bread has cooled enough for you to touch it, take a sharp knife and slice the coins into two. If all went well, they puffed in the oven and you'll only have to cut the edges.

Leave the coins to cool.

Enjoy.

VARIATIONS

1. If you are a fan of caraway seeds, add a tablespoonful of them in the dough to give the bread some added flavor.
2. For a malted, sweeter flavor, replace some of the rye flour with rye malt flour.
3. Instead of baking the bread quickly at high temperature, bake them in a cooling oven to simulate the last bake in a woodfired oven. This will give the bread an even sweeter flavor.





PAIN DE MÉTEIL

Words and photos: JARKKO LAINE



Wheat and rye have a long history together. As we found out in the article about the history of rye, the cereal was first considered a weed, growing in the midst of the valued wheat fields of ancient farmers, and while we can't know for sure, it was quite likely that some of the grains got mixed at the time of harvest, resulting in a wheat flour with a percentage of rye in it.

A more intentional mix was found later in France, where farmers found that growing wheat and rye together made the harvest

more likely to succeed: the added portion of rye, going from one third to half of the seeds, protected the wheat from cold.

A field with this mix of wheat and rye was called "champs de méteil" and bread made with flour from these fields, "pain de méteil."

The definitive bread encyclopedia, [Dictionnaire universel du pain](#), mentions pain de méteil only passingly, but a search online proved that it is a type of bread still produced by at least some of the coun-

try's bakers and home bakers today.

There is no one official formula — in fact the only thing the formulas I found online have in common is the 50/50 wheat and rye flour mix. Some use a natural yeast levain, others are yeasted, with or without a poolish pre-dough. And when using a levain, the instruction on whether it should be a rye leaven or a wheat one contradict each other merrily.

That's why, in this recipe, I have taken my own liberties, going for what I imagine to be close to the authentic pain de méteil while staying true to my own preferences in bread (while I imagine using wholegrain wheat would be more authentic, I went with bread flour, for example). I suggest you give this bread a try and then do the same: adjust the recipe according to your own tastes. Once you get familiar with the recipe, one of the first things to experiment is the hydration — try adding more water to see what happens.

Worth noting also is that pain de méteil is simply one name for a bread with these proportions of ingredients. Almost, maybe exactly, similar recipes are made around the world under different names. The typical Mischbrot from Germany is one such example.

At a 50/50 ratio of rye to wheat, this bread already demonstrates a lot of rye's baking properties: the dough is quite sticky and you won't be able to knead it much. Instead, do a series of gentle stretches and folds in the bowl using wetted hands.

Shaping also needs to be done carefully so you don't break the weak gluten structure. When you bake the bread and cut into it, you'll notice this is quite a dense bread. Moist, sweet and delicious, but not with an open crumb like what you'd find in a wheat bread.

That's how it's supposed to be.

"When you bake the bread and cut into it, you'll notice this is quite a dense bread. Moist, sweet and delicious, but not with an open crumb like what you'd find in a wheat bread. That's how it's supposed to be."

PRE-DOUGH / STARTER

8-10 hours before you mix the dough (e.g. the night before)

To imitate a flour made from a field growing rye and wheat mixed with one another, create a flour mix with equal amounts of both flours. Experiment with different flours (Wholegrain, sifted, and so on. Stone milled if possible).

Ingredients	Quantity	Baker's %
Dark rye flour (wholegrain)	575 g	50%
Bread flour	575 g	50%

Now, start by creating a starter using your méteil flour mix:

Ingredients	Quantity	Baker's %
Flour mix (from above)	150 g	100%
Water	150 g	100%
Ripe sourdough starter	50 g	17%

Stir well until everything is incorporated, cover, and leave on the kitchen counter to ferment.

FINAL DOUGH

Ingredients	Quantity	Baker's %
Flour mix (from above)	1,000 g	100%
Water	750 g	75%
Starter (from above)	300 g	30%
Salt	20 g	2%

As you see, the final mix is rather basic: water, flour, salt, starter. The only thing separating this bread from a typical wheat based sourdough bread really is the amount of rye.

1. Mix all ingredients except salt using your hands and/or a plastic scraper.
2. When there are no dry lumps of flour left, you may knead the dough for a little while (1 to 2 minutes), but it's totally optional.
3. Leave the dough for 30 minutes, then add the salt and mix well again.
4. While the dough going through the first 2 hours of its first rest, stretch and fold it (in the bowl) every 30 minutes.
5. Let the dough rest for about two hours more at room temperature (22°C), or until about doubled in size.
6. Shape the bread, place into floured baskets or on a floured cloth, the couche.
7. Leave the shaped breads to rest until about doubled in size. This can take anything from a couple of hours (at 22°C) to five or more depending on the room temperature.
8. Bake in a hot oven at 230°C (preheated to 250°C) for 50 minutes or until the dough has a deep brown color, almost burned but not quite (this again is a personal preference, so I say you choose.)

When the bread is ready, give a few hours to cool on a wire rack. Then enjoy. This bread is delicious with some good cheese or as a base for a deli style sandwich.



RYE BREAD TIPS FROM THE READERS

No two bakers do everything in their bread making routine exactly the same way. Through our experiments, the books we've read and the people who have taught us — as well as our individual personalities — we each have our own set of tricks, tips and experiences that we put in action whenever we enter the kitchen.

This is why I find it so exciting to know that there is a varied group of bakers from all over the world reading and discussing the

magazine. People who have a lot to share.

So, while researching rye bread making for this issue of BREAD, I decided to tap into that knowledge and ask you to share your favorite rye bread making tips.

On the following pages, are your answers: eleven sets of ideas submitted by readers (Thank you!). Maybe there's something in there that you'll be experimenting with in your next rye bread bakes?

**

Your sourdough must be really at its best.

Long rise time, first in a container in the fridge, then in baskets.

Use a good unrefined sea salt.

Use nonindustrial flour.

— *Bertil Ågren*

Our tip is for sourdough wheat breads with larger amounts of rye, but it also works for 100% rye breads.

Breads with too much rye in the mix tend to get flatter and with a denser crumb, not due to the lower gluten content of rye, but to the fact that some enzymes in rye that affect the gluten structure are not deactivated by heat (like the ones in wheat).

The way to overcome this "problem" is to acidify the dough, either using some amount of citric acid or by producing a very ripe sourdough starter using all the rye in the recipe.

— *Augusto from Garage Bakery*

A good method is to scald the rye flour before mixing the dough together. I normally do it the night before i bake.

The rye get a deeper flavor and the bread becomes more juicy. I also believe that the bread holds it's stability better.

— *Johanna Kindvall*

When seeking a true German style, naturally leavened, 100% rye loaf with whole rye berries included in the formula, I found that baking in a Pullman pan (lidded) wrapped in foil is the only way to get good results.

An hours long bake at a low temperature is the other essential step.

— *Susan Polk,
amateur sourdough baker*

When I bake a "light chleba" or deli rye (recipe from Daniel Leader's Local Breads, I substitute whole rye flour for the light flour in the sourdough and then substitute 50 g (25%) dark rye flour for that amount of the high-gluten / bread flour in the final dough.

I also grind 1.5 tbsp of caraway seeds in a dedicated coffee grinder, which I add to the flour in the dough. It makes a more full-flavored bread, which we prefer.

I brush the unbaked loaf with water after slashing it and sprinkle medium-coarse cornmeal on top, then brush the hot baked loaf with a cornstarch/water solution just after taking it out of the oven. I use a medium coarse cornmeal on the parchment, placed on a rimless baking sheet as well, then slide it onto the hot stone.

— *Joy Danzig*

SHAPING

I always shape (mould) fully rye dough with wet or oiled hands on wet or oiled surface. This way, it is really easy to shape tin loaves. When I want to prove it in the basket, I just plunge the wet rye dough to a mix of rice and wholewheat flour.

This method of shaping rye dough is really easy, mess-free and without dough stickiness problems. (I found this tip originally from Andrew Whitley's "[Do Sourdough](#)")

RYE DOUGH

It is really helpful to mix warm to hot water with some wholemeal rye flour day before I want to bake and next day mix it with other ingredients according to recipe. This mix gives some elasticity to the usually sticky rye mass. (Based on Lepard's "The Handmade Loaf")

— *Tomas*



I store my rye sour (starter) at 100% in the fridge and feed it every 10 days or so, without having to discard any as I bake every two to three weeks.

Two or three days before the bake, I begin increasing to the needed amount. The evening before, I take it out of the fridge, separate out what I need for the bake (putting the rest, say 50g or so, back in the fridge), increase the hydration to 150% and leave it at room temp overnight.

Make sure your container has plenty of room, as this will really expand. In the morning, the starter is ready to go.

— Bob Evans

Ruislimppu: Instead of rye flour on the outside use white poppy seeds! (Photo above)

100% rye loaf in tin: Flavour the dough with orange zest and dark raisins.

— Eva-Teréz Gölin

Bake rye sourdough in tin and add 10% malted rye and 5% shortly (2 min) boiled rowan berries into the dough.

— Jukka Kotkanen,
founder of [Raimugido](#)

It's difficult to get a light loaf from 100% whole grain flour, so the tricks to a light loaf are in how you develop the gluten and handle the dough.

1. Always mill the flour the day before so it's cooled down.

2. Break the recipe into parts and deal with each part separately:

A: Sourdough or Desem 70% hydration. Mix the day before bake and keep in fridge.

B: Rye flour and water 72% hydration. Mix the day before bake and keep in fridge.

C: Remaining Hard Red flour + water + yeast + oil/butter + sugar (yeast food). Mix the day of the bake.

Baking Day

1. Day of Bake take part "C" and develop the gluten remove from mixer and flatten into a disk on the counter.

2. Part "A" lay ontop of part "C" and cut thru both doughs. Cut into pieces and put back into the mixer and knead. (there is no rye in the dough so far so develop the gluten)

3. Remove from mixer and flatten into a disk on the counter. Take the "B" part of the recipe, (the rye) and lay on top of the developed dough as before cut into small pieces and put back into the mixer. Knead 1 minute, remove and complete by hand. Add the caraway seeds at the end.

This method allows you to develop the gluten on the wheat while not over developing the rye portion of the bread, which will get slimy.

— Tamara from wholegrain100.com

Add 10% rye flour to any savory bread formula for a kick in flavor. For even more flavor and a great crust, retard the dough in the refrigerator for a minimum of 12 hours. Even better is a 24 hour to 48 hour retarding period.

— drmillsjr

Sprinkle fennel seeds on the bottom of your tin before putting your dough in. Lovely fennel infusion.

Prunes, Golden sultanas, dates or apricots are delicious in a rye loaf. Best served with cheese.

Rye is best cut into 24 hours after baking, gives time for the bread to settle.

Caraway rye is delicious with smoked salmon and cream cheese.

— Ma Baker



A BREAD BAKER'S ODYSSEY

Words: JARKKO LAINE

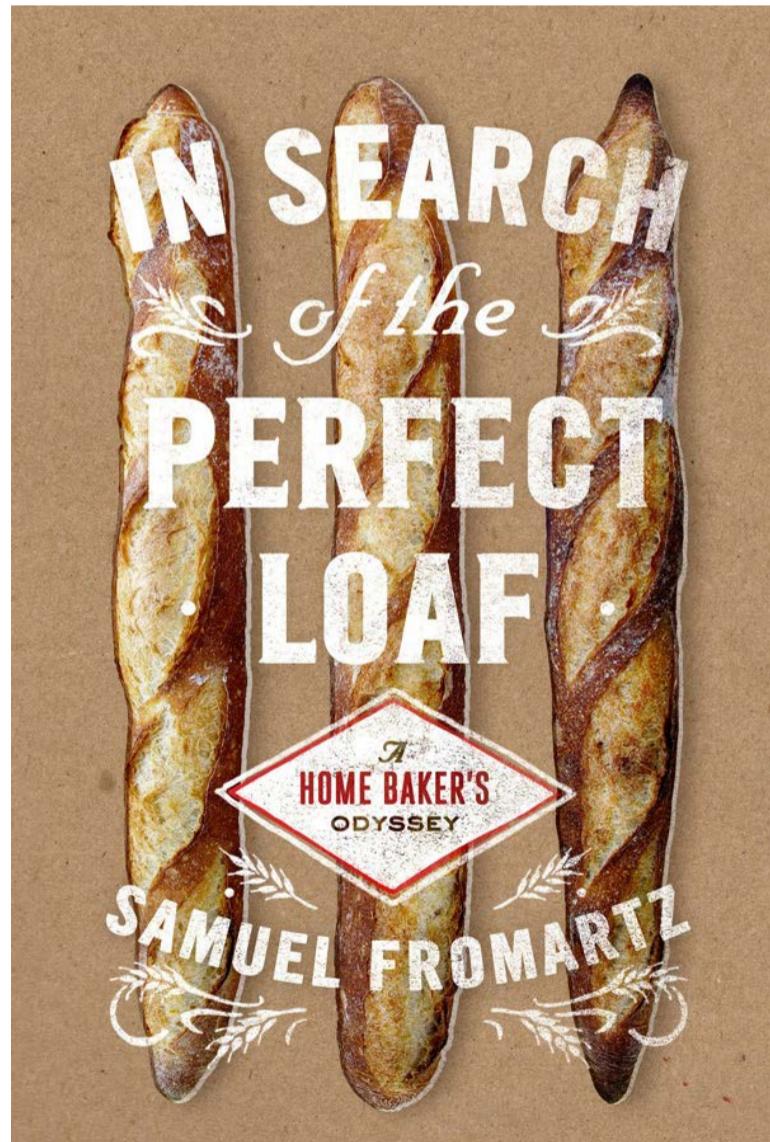
Photos: SAMUEL FROMARTZ

Like so many bread amateurs, I have a big shelf filled with an ever growing collection of bread making books. I'm used to the smiles and jokes from my friends and family when I add yet another book to the collection, but I can't stop...

Yes, I know that a new bread making book mostly repeats things that have been said many times before. But still, each author also puts something of their own into his or her book, giving it a personal touch and so far, none of my books have failed to give me at least one or two new ideas.

I knew nothing about Samuel Fromartz before I met him on Facebook a little while ago. Then, pretty soon after this first encounter, his book, [In Search of the Perfect Loaf](#) was published (on September 4) this year, and while it's scary to pick a favorite, I'm loving the book so far. The story of this journalist and home baker's journey to find the perfect loaf of bread might very well be the year's most importat bread book for me.

To be honest, the book makes me a little bit jealous actually: if I was to write a book about bread, this book is



very close to how I'd want to do it.

Fromartz, a friendly man known among bakers simply as Sam, says he wrote the book mainly for himself. That shows: In Search of the Perfect Loaf is a book for home bakers and bread lovers, written by one of us.

Instead of listing tons of recipes and formulas, Fromartz explains how bread making isn't about the recipes. What matters is that you practice and gain a feel of bread making. And then, you can continue experimenting.

If you are looking for bread making instructions, or a recipe book, there are other options better suited for you. However, if you want to be a part of a bread revolution and build your love for bread through a home baker's adventures, In Search of the Perfect Loaf is for you.

I asked Sam Fromartz a few questions about the new book, bread, and bread making.

Jarkko: Your new book, *In Search of the Perfect Loaf*, is quite different from the bread books already out there in the market. Who is the book for and what would you like that person to gain from reading it?

Sam: You know, I pitched this book in the depths of the recession and I had no expectation a publisher would pick it up. Given how bad things were, I simply wrote the book I wanted to write to answer questions I had. Truly, I was pursuing my curiosity, my passion, wherever it might take me from archeo-botanists looking at the earliest evidence of grains in the Fertile Crescent to the marvelous bakers with whom I worked.

The result is this book.

I thought home bakers as crazy and obsessive as me might like it, and maybe people generally interested in food.

So, when beginning bakers try a "recipe" and get frustrated when it doesn't work out, they are kind of missing the point. The real recipe is to make bread time and again, until one day it becomes second nature.

Samuel Fromartz, *In Search of the Perfect Loaf*



But I really wrote it for myself, because I find it's really hard to think about audience. It kind of shackles you before you've even started. But if you truly follow your curiosity, people will find that enticing.

Jarkko: In the book, when you speak about the special role bread and bread making has in your life, as a home baker, I feel I can relate to it perfectly. What do you think it is about bread that makes the simple staple food so special and why is the perfect loaf worth pursuing?

Sam: Well, bread is the most obvious staple (aside from rice perhaps) that we eat, and it's in front of us all the time.

Usually, we don't begin to look at the most obvious thing right in front of our nose. But once you do, there are so many aspects to explore, the search is endless. I can't tell

you how much I actually left out of the book — tangents, explorations that were simply too numerous to wrangle into this book.

The search simply became my own vehicle for exploration, like many great books, going all the way back to the *Odyssey*. I'm simply following that long line on my own path.

Jarkko: What is a perfect loaf for you?

Sam: Jim Lahey of [Sullivan Street Bakery](#) in New York City told me recently, "The Perfect Loaf doesn't exist!" And he's right. I like many different loaves but I always feel they might be improved. Sometimes you get close to perfect but never quite there. That's what keeps you going.

Jarkko: During the journey, you met and baked with many great bakers around the world. What would you say was the most important thing you learned from them?

Sam: How individual they were.

The bread was an expression of their hands, their bakeries, their judgments and the ingredients they were using at that time. I baked with many great bakers and no one made the same loaf.

One thing that's interesting is that so many baking books tell you how to shape a loaf. Well, no one I worked with shaped a loaf like anyone else. It was largely individual technique.



"The Perfect Loaf doesn't exist!"

"I think we are just on the cusp of bread 2.0. If the first wave of the artisan bread revolution was rediscovering Old World breads, I think the next wave will be in rediscovering old world grains."

The one exception may have been in Germany, where bakers come out of trade schools. They all knew how to shape very coarse, wet rye dough and they all did it the same way.

Of course, I could not! So I evolved my own technique.

Jarkko: *It seems to me, and you also talk about this in your book, that we are on the verge of a renaissance of bread — maybe something bigger than just returning to making bread as it was once made. There is also a lot of reimagining and innovation going on. Where do you see bread going in the next years?*

Sam: I think we are just on the cusp of bread 2.0. If the first wave of the artisan bread revolution was rediscovering Old World breads, I think the next wave will be in rediscovering old world grains.

When you think about it, roller milled white flour is the outlier in humanity's relationship with grains. For most of history, we ate largely whole grains and a vast diversity of them. Wheat wasn't the de facto staple. I think the most exciting bakers today are looking into ways of using those grains — whether spelt, rye or ancient wheats like emmer and einkorn. I think we'll see more loaves made with barley, and with porridges, like oats, or with maize/corn.

In the US, we've learned that whole grain bread equals whole wheat bread, but I actually think whole wheat isn't the best tasting loaf. But mix in whole rye with whole wheat and you get something marvelous. So those explorations are just beginning.

Secondly, there's a home baking revolution going on spurred by social media and the Internet. That will propel things out of the professional realm, I think, at least among a core of committed home bakers.

Jarkko: Is there something else you'd like say to the bakers (both home bakers and bakers from small artisan bakeries) reading this?

Sam: A baker in Paris told me to make my loaf with love, and show that love to others. It sounds a bit corny but he's right.

What he was saying was care about what you do, care deeply. If you bring that kind of attention to your work, people will appreciate it and it will be reflected in your bread. And you will be a better person because of it.



BREAD FROM THE BARBECUE



Words: JARKKO LAINE

Photos: MEGAN FORSYTH



Would you believe me if I told you the bread pictured right above this sentence was baked without using an oven?

You should, because it really is.

On the other hand, I wouldn't blame you if you didn't.

When I first saw Megan Forsyth's breads on her Instagram stream, her Instagram handle, [@bbqbaker](#) caught my attention. I asked myself if this meant she actually baked in a barbecue, but the bread looked so good, so well baked — nothing like my experiments in baking without using an oven — that at first, I decided against my hunch. "Bbqbaker must refer to an interest in barbecued food in addition to bread", I told myself. While my campfire bread was charred on one side and under

baked on the other, Megan's was just like the breads the rest of us bake in regular ovens.

I was wrong.

And once I realized this; that the username wasn't about barbecue and bread but baking in a barbecue, I got very curious:

Why would she do this? And more importantly: how does she do it?

I decided to find out, and so I got in touch with this fine home baker from Australia to ask her a few questions about her bread and the way she bakes it in a barbecue. She was immediately on board, and so, thanks to Megan's experiments and willingness to share, maybe you too will soon be baking bread without an oven.

I'm sure I will be trying this soon!

* *

Jarkko: Can you tell a little bit about yourself and your background in bread making?

Megan: I have three children and a background in science, and have been at home for an extended period bringing up my children.

During my time at home, my interest in bread has evolved from the baking of the simple comforting goods that I enjoyed as a child (cakes, scones etc.) to yeasted breads and more recently, sourdough.

Having worked my way merrily through the yeasted bread recipes of [River Cottage](#), [Andrew Whitley](#) and [Dan Lepard](#), I found myself frustrated by the inaccessible sourdough sections of these books — I had

failed to raise a starter on two occasions. Last September, I finally raised a starter, made an agreeable first loaf and since then sourdough has pretty much been a force beyond my control and a daily endeavor.

The time at home raising my third child has provided ample opportunity to experiment and observe starter and dough behavior. Luckily my wonderful husband and kids love the bread so have been happy to put up with a bit (well, a lot) of kitchen mess and fair amount of preoccupation on my part.

Books like Maggie Glezer's [Artisan Baking](#) and Dan Leader's [Local Breads](#) have helped me along the way, however several sessions spent observing, talking and (awkwardly) shaping with Phil Agnew, baker for Jocelyn's Provisions in Brisbane, has made a huge difference to my understanding of the sourdough process and consequently my bread.



Jarkko: Why do you bake in a barbecue? Where did the idea come from?

Megan: My oven died about eight months into my sourdough adventures, just as I was starting to make real progress. A new oven wasn't on the cards in the short-term so I turned to the barbecue in desperation.

I had read in passing of a fellow sourdough baker (Derek Hill, [House of Bakes](#)) using his barbecue while waiting for a replacement oven so I thought I had nothing to lose.

The first few loaves were disastrous (pale, flat and disheartening), but bit by bit, I was able to start to replicate an oven environment and eventually achieved bread even better than in my previous two ovens.



Once I became braver with temperatures (up to 270°C / 518°F) the bread improved even more.

Jarkko: What's your baking setup like?

Megan: I have a very basic 3-burner barbecue that runs on an 8.5 kg gas bottle. It sits just outside my kitchen, which makes it a very easy transfer for baking. I bake with a specialized barbecue baking stone.

Jarkko: What are the most important things that need to be taken into account when baking in a barbecue instead of an oven?

Megan: The direct heat of the barbecue of course makes hot spots inevitable, and initially I found it difficult to bake bread through without it burning on the base.

I bake using the indirect heat of the outer burners with the bread placed on a baking stone placed over the central burner. The central burner is simply used in the pre-heating phase to reach temperature of 270-280°C (518-536°F).

The baking stone is elevated using a trestle which sits over a double perforat-

ed layer of aluminum foil to assist convection, and as long as the bread is rotated three or four times across the bake there are no problems with uneven baking.

Inefficient barbecue models like mine lose a lot of heat through the generous vents and therefore creating (and containing) steam can be difficult.

To overcome this, I cover the bread for the first 20 minutes with a stainless steel mixing bowl that has been preheated along with the barbecue, just as a Dutch oven works.

This method proved far more successful than generating steam with water in a tray alongside the uncovered bread. A barbecue with an insulated lid and smaller vents may not require this additional step.

Prior to purchasing the baking stone, a Dutch oven produced pretty good bread in the barbecue also, however the crust was thicker and often the base was too dark.

The baking stone has also provided the freedom to experiment with different shapes and I have had a great time making batards, particularly once I became comfortable with Phil's neat shaping method.

A one kilo loaf takes about



45 to 50 minutes to bake.

Jarkko: What is the trickiest part in baking bread in a barbecue?

Megan: Avoiding hot spots is the hardest part, and it doesn't take much inattention to ruin a loaf.

Having little to no temperature control can be difficult also; however, you soon begin to rely on intuition (and your nose!) to judge the different stages of the bake.

Being restricted to one loaf at the time is limiting, as is the rate at which you go through gas when you are using an inefficient barbecue.

Jarkko: Is there something that is easier compared to baking in a regular oven?

Megan: Achieving high temperatures is probably the biggest plus of using a barbecue: It can get to 270°C in about 25 minutes (faster if I use all three burners).

With hot months just around the corner here in subtropical Queensland I can see baking outside on the BBQ a big improvement on last summer's sweltering in the hot kitchen.

Another positive of the barbecue is avoiding wear and tear on a domestic oven. My \$200 AUD barbecue has been baking bread daily now for eight months and shows no signs of slowing down.

Jarkko: How did you learn the tricks of the trade?

Megan: Resources directly relating to baking bread on the barbecue are pretty sparse.

I came across a few threads on discussion pages and a couple of blog posts but mostly it came down the trial and error. There may be resources out there I wasn't aware of — I just got stuck in and tried it out.

Not surprisingly people selling barbe-

"With hot months just around the corner here in subtropical Queensland I can see baking outside on the BBQ a big improvement on last summer's sweltering in the hot kitchen."



cues have been a wealth of information if you stop to ask. Initially I was reluctant to divulge what I was doing with my barbecue, thinking they might think me a little crazy, but quickly I realized I was amongst friends.

Jarkko: *Is there something you're practicing now or would like to learn next?*

Megan: With regards to bread in general I have done relatively little with rye flour in large proportions in bread so I am hoping to experiment with dark rye breads over the months ahead.

I am also keen to try baking on a few different types of barbecues (the smaller kettle variety for example). We do not plan to buy a new oven in the short-term but would love to upgrade to a more efficient barbecue that doesn't require weekly trips to the hardware store for gas and could perhaps handle a couple of loaves at a time.

Jarkko: *Do you have something else in mind that you'd like to add before we wrap up?*

Megan: I'd just like to add how invaluable online bread communities have been over the course of the year. In particular the tight-knit and supportive sourdough bakers of Instagram have given so much

guidance, feedback and encouragement over the past 12 months. The willingness of professional bakers to interact with those just starting out is a wonderful thing.

Also, I owe a great deal of gratitude to baker, and now friend Phil Agnew. Phil was very generous with his time and knowledge and very patient as he guided me through the shaping of sourdough and in explaining his method of making bread.

Observing all the different stages of the baking process and watching dough as it changes with fermentation are all immensely useful for the home baker to better understand what's going on in their home kitchen.

* *

I must agree with the last sentiment. The bakers in the Instagram community, Megan herself included are a great bunch, always nice to hang out with and generous with their knowledge and experience. If you haven't made the jump yet, join us.

And then, when you try out Megan's advice and need some guidance, I'm sure she'll be there to give you a hand!





INSANELY INTERESTED IS A PUBLISHER OF MICRO MAGAZINES FOR THE CURIOUS.

A micro magazine is a magazine that focuses on a very specific topic, published online or off by a very small (but passionate) team of writers.

I am Jarkko Laine, stay-at-home dad, writer, the publisher of this magazine, beginner cigar box guitar player, and all-round creative guy from Vantaa, Finland.

I believe that as humans, we are born curious and need to keep learning about different things to enjoy our lives to the fullest. Insanely Interested is here to deliver a small part of that healthy diet for a curious brain.

My love for a dark crust on a soft white crumb combined with a need to find out how things are made lead me to create the magazine you are now reading.

Through small steps, as I keep learning more about how online publishing works, I am building [Insanely Interested](#) into a sustainable, long-lasting business that can serve the world by presenting new ideas and stories from people doing things they believe in.

Having you with me on this journey brings me joy.





The video begins at 5:30 in the morning. It's still dark, about two hours before dawn. The baker uses a flashlight to find his way as he looks for wood, chops it and then uses it to light a fire in a wood-fired masonry oven standing on his back yard. Then, while the oven slowly gathers heat, he gets to work and starts mixing dough and baking bread in a natural rhythm dictated by the fire and the bricks.

Once every week, usually on Monday mornings, I sit down at my computer and go on a deliberate search to get myself up to date on what's going on in the world of bread making and to see if I can find new bread making videos to share with you. The results from these searches are the videos and web links you see on the magazine's [Facebook](#) and [Tumblr](#) pages — videos like this one: five to ten minute clips showing small scale bakers do their work. Work that is beautiful and real. Work that doesn't seem to need to show off.

THE BREAD MAN FROM RAGLAN

Words: JARKKO LAINE

Photos: AARON BRUNET

The baker in this video was [Aaron Brunet](#), an IT professional, food lover and bread baker from Raglan, a surfing town with a population of 2,700 situated on the west coast of New Zealand. His bread making video, titled "Bread Man" made a big impression on me with its sense of good life and the connection that was built around this humble baker's work: It's beautiful bread, but even more beautiful is the reaction from customers when they come to buy their weekly loaves.

They are a part of the story.

This would already have been enough to get me interested in getting in touch with Aaron. But there is more to him: Aaron Brunet is not only a baker baking lovely bread in his backyard but also the winner of 2013's MasterChef New Zealand!

Interested to learn more, I emailed Aaron Brunet for an interview. He agreed, and now you'll have the chance to hear what the friendly baker had to say.

Jarkko: For some background, can you tell a bit about yourself, how you got started with bread, and what led you to building the brick oven?

Aaron: I live in a little surf town called Raglan (on the west coast of New Zealand about two hours drive from Auckland, our biggest city) with my wife Ani and daughter Ariana.

We are lucky to enjoy living in a very beau-

"I was [...] staring out the window in a relaxed state of mind when I had a sudden inspiration to build a big brick oven and start making sourdough for the locals in Raglan"

tiful part of the world, surrounded by nature and a great local community. Ani teaches yoga from home and after six years here, we have met lots of lovely people.

I got started making bread when we decided to have a party to thank everyone who comes to yoga, and the idea popped into my head to make a big batch of buns to go with the soup we'd made.

The buns went down well and I got my first taste of the enjoyment

people get from freshly baked bread.

A little later I was on a plane returning from a trip to visit friends and staring out the window in a relaxed state of mind when I had a sudden inspiration to build a big brick oven and start making sourdough for the locals in Raglan. That started me on a three month research mission learning all I could about brick ovens. Once I heard about the book "[The Bread Builders](#)" and got a copy from Amazon there was no turning back — it became my bible.

My oven took me about six months to build in total and I loved everything about the process.

I remember my mother showing me how to make pizza dough when I was a teenager and being fascinated by how the yeast transformed the flour and water.

For years I had wanted to build a pizza oven and when the sourdough idea came to me I guess I gave myself permission to build an oven that could do both.



Jarkko: In the “Bread Man” video, you are shown baking bread and selling it to people from your community in what you described as a weekly pocket money project. Can you tell a bit about how you got started with selling the bread, why you decided to do this, and what you got out of the project?

Aaron: After our yoga party with the buns I realised there was an opportunity to make more bread for our yoga people.

I started with a couple of loaves here and there in our home oven and the enjoyment everyone got from them encouraged me to keep going and learn more. Once I made my own sourdough starter, I got intrigued by the process and it became a bit of an obsession.

People here in Raglan were very supportive and it became a happy combination of me loving the process and them loving the bread. Even just selling a couple of loaves helped me buy more flour and little bits of equipment here and there, but the main motivation was always the satisfaction I felt seeing the loaves come out of the oven and the pleasure people got from eating my bread.

Once I started reading more and more about sourdough, I could see years of learning ahead of me and I felt really motivated to make the best bread I could.

Jarkko: What’s your favorite moment in the process of making bread? Why?

Aaron: For quite a while, my favourite moment was gazing at the colours of the loaves while hearing the crusts “singing”—the crackling sound as the loaves cool when they’ve just come out of the oven. It’s a very appealing audio visual moment in time and I guess the satisfaction of finishing the bake day adds a lot to the occasion.

When I think about the whole process now though, I realise I’ve developed a new favourite moment. It’s during the rounding of

“Even just selling a couple of loaves helped me buy more flour and little bits of equipment here and there, but the main motivation was always the satisfaction I felt seeing the loaves come out of the oven and the pleasure people got from eating my bread.”



my biggest loaves (which are 1.8 kg of dough). Because I'm usually only making 9 or 18 of them at a time, I allow myself the time to focus really intently on each one.

What I love is seeing the surface of the dough come to life as I gently work the ball tighter and tighter with my hands. I use a percentage of very coarse stoneground wheat and rye in a high-hydration dough and the little flecks of bran are visible through the translucent skin, they're like little markers making it easy to see the way the gluten is stretching and elongating. I also love seeing the gas bubbles in the dough come nearer to the surface then flatten and spread themselves out. As I increase the surface tension of the dough I watch very carefully and try to feel when the gluten has reached its limit so I stop just before any tearing happens.

This whole episode only takes about 15 seconds but to me it feels like a pivotal step in forming the character of the final loaves, a real chance for me to give my full attention to each one.

Jarkko: Even though you are very interested in food in general, bread seems to have a special place in your mind and heart. What is it about bread that makes it so special?

Aaron: I think it's the fact that the ingredients are so simple but the transformation that happens to them is so enormous. Is there any other opportunity in cooking to be involved in such a dramatic shift from such plain (even boring) ingredients to end products full of character which lit-

erally show the hand of the maker?

I also love the fact that bread has such a long history and is loved as a fundamental, staple food by most cultures that make it.

Jarkko: What's your favorite kind of bread to make? Why?

Aaron: At the moment my favourite is baguettes. Crust is always my favourite part of a loaf and with a baguette, the ratio of crust to crumb feels right to me.

I've started making some based on the [Tartine](#) recipe with a mixture of sourdough levain and yeast poolish, they have a very pleasing combination of flavour and lightness. My regular bread people have been loving them and I'm enjoying the challenge of figuring out how to make them the best they can be.

There's lots of shaping involved and I find myself getting better and better at it the more I make. I love how the scoring has such a big effect on the final look of each one and I can see that I have a lot more to learn.

Jarkko: How has your MasterChef victory affected your bread making? Do you still bake weekly for your neighbors or do you have other bread related projects going on?

Aaron: When I went away to MasterChef, I took my starter with me and kept it going in the house that us contestants lived in.

I didn't make much bread during the 11 weeks of the filming, partly because I realised

we were never going to get enough time in a challenge to do it justice. When I got home, we had to keep the result secret for seven months which was a big challenge.

I did a few bakes in my oven over that summer but once the result was public, my life was turned upside down for quite a while and bread had to take a back seat. I was busy working on my cookbook for many months and I really enjoyed making a chapter about my bread but I still wasn't doing regular weekly bakes. I was actually quite unsure if I would return to making bread regularly.

Thankfully, a very good friend encouraged me, and I think it was partly because he could see that baking had become a valuable part of my life, a part that brought joy to me and helped me stay grounded and connected to simple pleasures.

It was this same friend that facilitated the making of the video about my bread when he brought his film-maker nephew around and we spent a very special bake day together.

Jarkko: After your victory, you had the option of following a career path in professional kitchens but decided to stay in Raglan and focus on the good life with your family and yoga. What made you pick this journey instead of the faster paced life of becoming a restaurant chef?

Aaron: It just felt right. Straight after MasterChef finished on TV, I did some work experience in a big busy restaurant kitchen and found that the part



I enjoyed the most was making my bread as part of the menu I created.

I trained some of the pastry chefs on how to make my bread and I really enjoyed guiding them towards the result I had in mind too. Each morning when the loaves came out of the restaurant ovens I was pleased to see how they turned out and when I reflected on the experience later, I could see that was the part of the day that felt best to me.

This helped me realise that fine dining mattered less to me than the enjoyment of making simple foods really really well and staying in touch with natural rhythms and processes.

Jarkko: In your book, [Cook With Me](#), you have a big section about bread, and I also read in one article online that you might be planning another book that would be all about bread... What do you think the role of bread will be in your life in the coming years as you are building your work life around food?

Aaron: I've been imagining a bakery cafe next to a yoga studio so that Ani and I can work alongside each other but also give each other the space to be ourselves.

I'm inspired by what I've read about Tartine in San Francisco and the way they make bread to sell direct to customers as well as using it their cafe menu, rather than a large-scale wholesale bakery. This is a model that I can see working well for me too, a place where bread is a key part of a business focussed on making simple foods to a really high standard. I'd like to keep learning and experimenting with the aim of making the very best bread I can.

I also love the idea of giving people a rich experience of the whole baking process and running courses and workshops to share what I learn about and love.

"This helped me realise that fine dining mattered less to me than the enjoyment of making simple foods really really well and staying in touch with natural rhythms and processes."





WHAT'S NEXT?

This is where we heat up our ovens and go our separate ways to experiment and learn more about bread. But only for a short while: the story continues on the magazine's web site, our Facebook page, as well as in the next issue that will arrive in your email inbox around the end of the year.

I hope you have enjoyed what we had to offer in this Autumn issue and feel excited to bake more bread and share it with your friends and neighbors!

As always, I would love to hear your thoughts on the issue and what you would like to see in the magazine in the future. So, don't hesitate to [email me](#) with your questions, comments and feedback. Also, if you'd like to write for the magazine or help in any other way, let me know.

Now, let's bake some bread!

Thank you for reading, and happy baking!

Jarkko Laine
Publisher

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