

Transitional Artisan Bread

Yields 1

Prep Time 10 min Cook Time 40 min Total Time 8 hr 20 min

Ingredients

1. 200g whole grain organic flour
2. 200g all purpose, unbleached organic flour
3. 1 1/4 tsp salt
4. extra flour for dusting
5. 40g flax seeds – soaked in equal parts water for a minimum of 20 minutes prior
6. 150 ml sourdough starter (fed in the previous 4 – 8 hour period)
7. 200 mL room temperature water (may need to add more)
8. 1 tbsp honey (add to water)
9. In a medium bowl, stir together the flour and salt. In a measuring cup, mix together the room temperature water and honey until combined, stir in flax mixture. Add the sourdough starter and water/honey/flax mixture to the dry ingredients and, using a wooden spoon or spatula, mix until you have a wet, sticky dough, about 30 seconds. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature until the surface is dotted with bubbles and the dough is 1 1/2 to 2 times in size (7-8 hours depending on your room temperature).
10. When the first rise is complete, place your heavy cast iron pot with lid into the oven and pre-heat the oven and the pot to 475 degrees F. Position the rack in the lower third of the oven. The pot needs to pre-heat for at least 30 minutes.
11. Generously dust a work surface with flour. Use a bowl scraper or rubber spatula to scrape the dough out of the bowl in one piece. Using lightly floured hands gently pat the dough out into a rectangle. With your dough spatula (or a large flipper) fold one short side of the dough into the middle and then fold the other short side on top. Then fold the dough in half the other direction. Dust lightly with flour, cover with plastic and let rest for 10 minutes. While you are waiting, line a medium sized bowl with parchment paper, using your fist to push the paper down into the bowl and your other hand to crease the paper around the inside and top edge of the bowl.
12. Repeat the folding process for the dough outlined above a second time. With lightly floured hands, lift the dough and place into the parchment lined bowl seam side down. Cover with plastic and place on the counter next to the stove to rise for 20 minutes. To test if the dough is ready, press, do not poke, the tip of one floured finger quickly and lightly, about half an inch, slightly off center, into the crown

of the dough (area of maximum expansion). If the indentation remains but springs back slightly, the dough is ready for the oven. If the dent fills in, give the dough another 5-10 minutes to rise and re-test.

13. Remove the plastic covering from your dough. Using heat resistant pot holders, carefully remove the pot from the oven and remove the lid. Using both hands, lift the dough out of the bowl by holding all corners of the parchment paper and lower it into the pot. The edges of the parchment paper will brown, but will be just fine in the hot oven.
14. Working quickly, use a sharp pair of scissors to make 3-4 shallow cuts at a 45 degree angle along the center line of the dough to assist in "oven spring". Cover the pot with the lid and put it back into the oven. Reduce the heat to 450 degrees F and bake for 30 minutes.
15. After 30 minutes, remove the lid and place a large baking sheet or tin foil on the rack underneath the pot and continue baking for another 10 minutes until the bread is a lovely chestnut color but not burnt. Use a heatproof spatula or pot holders to carefully lift the bread out of the hot pot and place it on a rack to cool thoroughly. If you have an instant read thermometer, the bread is done when the internal temperature is 190-200 degrees F.

Notes:

If you wish to make this more of a seedy style bread try adding the following:

20g poppy seeds

20g sunflower seeds, toasted

20g pumpkin seeds

40g sesame seeds, toasted

Spread sunflower and sesame seeds on a large baking sheet and toast in the oven at 350 degrees F for 5-10 minutes or until lightly toasted. Once cool, add them to the flour/salt mixture and some can be reserved for the top of the bread if you wish. Working quickly so cast iron pot stays hot lightly spray the dough with water prior to sprinkling seed mixture on top. Then lightly dust the top of the bread with flour using a small sieve (optional).

This is a hint in a recipe I have although I haven't tried it myself.

Unless you will consume all the bread within 2-3 days, cut it in half after it has cooled. Keep one half at room temperature and put the other half in the freezer. When you are ready for another half loaf, run it quickly under water to moisten the outside crust and place in pre-heated 350 degree F oven. Bake for 8-10 minutes, remove and let it finish thawing in the center. It will taste like freshly baked bread!

