

Workshop Title: Sourdough Bread-making 101

Speaker(s) & their titles: Tegan Wong-Daugherty, Co-founder of Buckwheat Flats Natural Foods (NB)

Executive Summary

Tegan provided a hands-on workshop on how to make sourdough bread. Sourdough bread is special in that it uses the local bacteria and yeasts present in your home as a leavener, which makes for distinct flavors and characteristics in each loaf. She outlines the steps and ingredients necessary for successful sourdough from start to finish.

Detailed Notes

- Tegan started breadmaking 17 years ago.
- She prefers to use stone ground flour because the whole grain of the kernel is in the flour. She uses Speerville Flour Mill flours.
- The shelf-life of flour has been increased with the removal of the germ
 - Can stay on shelf long time but loses a lot of the nutrition.
- Whole Grain flour promotes growing of beneficial yeasts and bacteria.
- Local food involves local biota, creates variation between sourdoughs in different regions.
- You can create your own local variety of bread, doesn't use monoculture of yeast, uses community of yeasts and bacteria that work together. Bring in their own way of digesting wheat.
- Basic bread ingredients that affect characteristics :
 - Flour, water, salt, temperature, time
- Starter: Start process with a quarter cup flour, a quarter cup water. Every day add tablespoon of each, stir in, no salt in starter, keep at room temperature.
 - Temperature of home can affect process ; different types of yeast have different preferences for temperature, which can have an impact on bread.
 - Looking for bubbling action and a slightly acidic smell.
 - Also should see it increase in bulk, means community is working.
 - Yeasts won't grow in reactive metal ; use food grade containers.
 - Cover with wet cloth for starter, wet cloth every time you add flour.
 - Rye is a good beginner grain. Complex flavors come out of rye. Promotes good types of bacteria.
 - By the end of seven days you should see it getting lively and it is ready to use for baking bread.
 - If you only use starter once a week, keep it in the fridge, but take it out a day before you use it for bread baking.
 - Always save part of your starter dough so that you don't have to re-make a starter each time you want to make bread.

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- Noticeable if it goes bad : might see mold, look gray and seem sluggish.
You can skim off the top; underneath should still be good to use.
- Introduction of salt :
 - Use sea salt, no iodine (poisons bacteria).
 - Plays important role, strengthens gluten and makes it more tough.
 - Water is important – shouldn't be chlorinated (poisons bacteria). Get chlorine out of city water.
- Side note : Poolish bread – mix in flour and water (half of total), add small amount of yeast, let ferment for 12-18 hours. Ends up somewhat similar to sourdough but not quite the same.
- Mixing wheat
 - Mix of sifted wheat and whole wheat flour to lighten bread
 - 25% Acadia light, 75% whole grain (3 cups whole wheat, 1 cup light)
 - Check weights on flour to make sure volume measurements work out.
 - Typical doughs 2:1 ratio flour to water
 - She uses 65-75% water hydration.
 - 4 total cups of flour with approximately 3 cups water
 - 700 grams flour, 490 grams water
 - Wetter dough is harder to work, but you get more bubbles and fermentation
 - Starter is 1 :1 ratio (100% hydration)
 - Mix flour and water first, without any leavening agent for 4-5 minutes, let rest for another 5 minutes. (She uses an electric mixer).
 - Then add starter (10% of mass of flour), mix for another 5 minutes. Let rest for a while.
 - Add 2% salt of mass of flour and mix.
 - Cover and let sit for awhile.
 - You can stretch and fold every half hour (let dough hang from hands, then put back in container and fold over ; do this for a couple of hours.
 - Oil can then be added as preservative, coat bowl and dough to keep the bread moist.
 - You can also add molasses or honey at this point as sweetener, but you must bake within next 2-4 hours if you add any sweetener – yeasts will be on sugar high and if you wait too long they will crash and affect the quality of the bread.
 - Cut into bread size pieces (loaves). Cover.
 - Allow to rise in the fridge overnight covered.
- Shaping dough
 - Make into snake first, then you can make whatever shape you like : a knot, twist baguette, etc.
 - Let rise for one more hour.

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- Cook at 450 Fahrenheit until it has hollow sound inside (approximately 25 minutes). Takes less time for smaller loaves.
- Side note : If you have live starter and you want to increase, you add minimum amount of starter, then keep adding flour and water to starter.