



## THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

### **100% Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread** (from Peter Reinhart's *Whole Grain Breads*)

Makes 1 sandwich loaf

Reinhart also has a "Transitional Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread" that is made the same way, except it uses white unbleached bread flour in the biga. You'll need a little less water when working with white flour.

#### Soaker:

1¾ cups (227 grams) whole wheat flour

½ teaspoon (4 grams) salt

¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons (198 grams) milk, buttermilk, yogurt, soy milk, or rice milk

1. Mix all of the soaker ingredients together in a bowl for about 1 minute, until all of the flour is hydrated and the ingredients form a ball of dough.
2. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and leave at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours. (If it will be more than 24 hours, place the soaker in the refrigerator; it will be good for up to 3 days. Remove it 2 hours before mixing the final dough to take off the chill.)

#### Biga:

1¾ cups (227 grams) whole wheat flour

¼ teaspoon (1 gram) instant yeast

¾ cup (170 grams) filtered or spring water, at room temperature (about 70F)

1. Mix all the biga ingredients together in a bowl to form a ball of dough
2. Using wet hands, knead the dough in the bowl for 2 minutes to be sure all of the ingredients are evenly distributed and the flour is fully hydrated. The dough should feel very tacky. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes, then knead it again with wet hands for 1 minute. The dough will become smoother but still be tacky.
3. About 2 hours before mixing the final dough, remove the biga from the refrigerator to take off the chill. It will have risen slightly but need not have risen significantly in order to use it in the final dough.

#### Final dough:

All of the Soaker

All of the biga

7 tablespoons (56.5 grams) whole wheat flour, plus extra for adjustments

5/8 teaspoon (5 grams) salt

2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast

2¼ tablespoons (42.5 grams) honey or agave nectar

1 tablespoon (14 grams) unsalted butter, melted, or vegetable oil

1. Using a metal pastry scraper, chop the soaker and the biga into 12 smaller pieces each (sprinkle some of the extra flour over the pre-doughs to keep the pieces from sticking back to each other).

2. If mixing by hand, combine the soaker and biga pieces in a bowl with all of the other ingredients except the extra flour and stir vigorously with a mixing spoon or knead with wet hands until all of the ingredients are evenly integrated and distributed into the dough. It should be soft and slightly sticky; if not, add more flour or water as needed.

If using a stand mixer, put the pre-dough pieces and all of the other ingredients except the extra flour into the mixer with the paddle attachment (preferable) or dough hook. Mix on slow speed for 1 minute to bring the ingredients together into a ball. Switch to the dough hook and mix on medium-low speed, occasionally scraping down the bowl, for 2 to 3 minutes, until the pre-doughs become cohesive and assimilated into each other. Add more flour or water as needed until the dough is soft and slightly sticky.

3. Dust a work surface with flour, then toss the dough in the flour to coat. Knead by hand for 3 to 4 minutes, incorporating only as much extra flour as needed, until the dough feels soft and tacky, but not sticky. Form the dough into a ball and let it rest on the work surface for 5 minutes while you prepare a clean, slightly oiled bowl.

4. Resume kneading the dough for 1 minute to strengthen the gluten and make any final flour or water adjustments. The dough should have strength and pass the windowpane test, yet still feel soft, supple, and very tacky. Form the dough into a ball and place it in the prepared bowl, rolling to coat with oil. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and let rise at room temperature for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, until it is about 1½ times its original size.

5. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work surface and form it into either a loaf pan shape. Place the dough in a greased 4 by 8½-inch bread pan. Cover the dough loosely with plastic wrap and let rise at room temperature for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, until it is about 1½ times its original size.

6. Preheat the oven to 425F. When the dough is ready to bake, place it in the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Rotate the loaf 180 degrees and continue baking for another 20 to 30 minutes, until the loaf is a rich brown on all sides, sounds hollow when thumped on the bottom, and registers at least 195F in the center.

7. Transfer the bread to a cooling rack and allow it to cool for at least 1 hour before serving.