

# Sourdough Demi Baguettes

Poetry & Pies

**prep time:** about 30-40 minutes, spread out

**rise/resting times:** 9-36 hours (depending on where it rises)

**baking time:** 30-35 minutes

**cooling time:** 1 hour

**total time:** 12-38 hours

**servings:** 12-16 (makes 3-4 demi baguettes)



## Ingredients & Equipment

### for the levain

- 25g active [sourdough starter](#)
- 50g flour
- 50g filtered water, 80F/27C
- [kitchen scale](#)
- [food thermometer](#)
- clean, clear jar (large enough for the levain to double)

### for the bread

- 100g levain (active, bubbly starter)
- 375g filtered water, 80F/27C
- 500g bread flour, plus more for shaping
- 10-12g salt (sea salt is ideal)
- large mixing bowl
- [straight container with measurements](#) (optional, but helpful)
- [baguette baker](#) (can use other styles or a sheet pan)
- [parchment paper](#)

## Instructions

### make the [levain](#)

1. Place 25g active starter in a medium jar or small mixing bowl.

2. Zero out your scale (or the “tare” button) and add 50g warm filtered water, about 80F/27C. Stir with a [small rubber spatula](#) or spoon until mixed well\*.
3. Zero out the scale again and add 50g flour. You can use any combination of flours, but if you are just starting out, you can play it safe with all-purpose or bread flour.
4. Mix well, ensuring there is no dry, unmixed flour and no visible lumps of flour.
5. Set the lid loosely on top of the jar or cover with plastic wrap.
6. Store in a spot with moderate temperature (roughly 70F/21C) for 8-12 hours, until it has doubled in volume, bubbles begin to break the surface, and it can pass the float test. Alternatively, you can place it in your turned-off oven with the light on and let it rise for 3-6 hours, depending on climate and the age of your starter. [See original post](#) for suggestions on how to time your levain and dough.

### **make the bread**

7. Once the levain is bubbly and active and passes the float test (see note below), you can begin mixing the bread dough.
8. Add 100g active levain/starter to your mixing bowl. Add 375g filtered water that is roughly 80F/27C. Don't stress if it's a little warmer or a little cooler. Mix until starter is mostly mixed in.
9. Add salt and stir well.
10. Add the bread flour and mix until fully combined. Eventually, it becomes hard to stir. At this point you could use your hands or you can simply use the spatula to somewhat fold the dough together (literally scooping from the edge and folding it over the middle section). Mix until there are no pockets of dry flour. It should be a shaggy dough at this point.
11. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a damp towel. Let sit on the counter for roughly 30 minutes (at least 20 but no more than 40). At this point, perform the first set of stretch and folds.

12. Stretching and folding is actually quite simple: Using a clean, damp hand, slide your fingers under one “side” of the bowl and grab that section of dough gently in your hand. Lift up gently to stretch it slightly, folding it over the middle of the bowl. It should reach the other side of the bowl or close to it. Rotate the bowl 90 degrees and repeat, until you have stretched and folded all 4 “sides” of the dough. Depending on the size of your bowl, you may need to do 5-6 stretch and folds for each set. Once done, cover again and let sit on the counter.
13. Repeat this process every 30ish minutes, for a total of 4-5 sets of stretches and folds. You’ll know the dough is ready for the next step when it is smooth, elastic, and becomes more difficult to stretch and fold. As well, you can use the translucency test: pinch a little piece of dough and pull it up until some light can pass through the middle. If light passes through without it breaking, it’s ready.
14. Bulk fermentation. Once you’ve done 4-5 stretch and folds and the dough is smooth and can pass the translucency test, cover it and place in a warm spot (no hotter than 90F/32C) until it has risen in volume by 50%. It should begin to be wobbly at this point. To make this easier, I suggest using a [straight edged vessel](#) so you can better tell when it’s risen 50%.
15. An ideal spot for bulk fermentation is your turned-off oven with the light turned on. However, if you don’t want it to be ready too quickly, you can use the counter. If it is rising too quickly, feel free to put in the fridge to slow down the rise until you are ready to do the shaping.
16. Optionally, you can deepen the sour flavor by placing the dough in the fridge once it’s risen about 20-30%. It can be refrigerated (if well-covered) for 8-48 hours. You can shape and final proof straight from the fridge.
17. Once it has risen by 50% and is wobbly (or after refrigerated fermentation—it won’t be as wobbly but should have risen nearly 50% by that point), gently dump the dough onto a well-floured surface. You can use bread flour or all-purpose. Cut dough into 3-4 equal pieces. Pre-shape it by folding each piece in half. Let sit for 10-20 minutes.
18. Now shape the dough. If using a ceramic or cast iron [baguette baker](#), line with strips of parchment or sprinkle generously with flour to prevent sticking. Also be sure the entire loaf is well-floured after shaping if not using parchment. If

using a sheet pan, it's recommended to line it with parchment to ensure the bread won't stick (this all depends on the material your pan is made of).

19. Take your first piece of dough and place it with the longest edge parallel to you/the edge of the counter. Use well-floured hands to pull the middle edge up and across the middle of the dough, kind of like folding a letter into thirds. Press it firmly with flat fingers as you go and work your way outward like this, until the bottom half is folded up. The goal is to help it elongate through firmly folding and pressing it. Repeat with the top, folding it down over the seam you made with the bottom section and pressing firmly as you go. Pinch the edges into a point to help develop the classic baguette shape. If needed, press it down so there is enough dough to grab and fold again. Repeat this process at least twice, until it is elongated and has nice pointy ends. Be sure to sprinkle more flour as needed.
20. Flip the dough over and place seam-side down on your prepared baguette baker. If you don't have a baguette baker, you can simply place it (well-floured) on a sheet pan to bake, with 2 inches between each loaf. Or, you can flour a tea towel and fold it up like walls between each loaf, then carefully transfer to your pan once puffed up. Let rise on the counter for 20-60 minutes, until puffed up just a bit. The timing of this final proof is very flexible, as the oven rise (known as oven spring) will make them rise plenty.
21. While you let the baguettes proof, preheat your oven to 450F/235C. If you are not using a lidded pan, you can get a crunchy crust by placing 1 cup of ice in a baking pan on the shelf below where you plan to bake (middle rack or one rung lower) about 5-10 minutes before you plan to put the bread in. Once proofed (no more than 60 minutes), bake for 20 minutes. If using a vessel with a lid, at this point, remove the lid and bake 10-15 minutes more, until darkened to desired color. If using a non-lidded baker or sheet pan, simply bake for 30-35 minutes.
22. Remove the bread from the pan and remove the parchment, if using. Set on a wire rack to cool at least 1 hour. Cutting a loaf before it's cooled sufficiently does alter the texture, so be sure to time it carefully.

## *Notes:*

1. **The Float test:** to know if a levain is “active” and ready to use, do the float test. When the levain has doubled in volume and the bubbles begin to break the surface, take a small spoonful and place in a cup of room temperature water. If it floats, it’s active and ready to use. If your starter is relatively new, you may need to do the float test a couple times. This could mean you need to build a larger levain so that you have enough extra to do multiple float tests.
2. There is a window of when you can use a levain. It can be used when just a couple bubbles break the surface or when the surface is very bubbly. That’s why I like the float test, at least when starting out with sourdough, to know it’s ready for sure.