

## AUVERGNE CROWN

*(formula from Daniel Leader)*

*Levain Starter (you will not use the full amount prepared):*

45g levain starter, firm (about ¼ cup)  
95g unbleached all-purpose flour  
5g stone-ground whole wheat flour  
50 g tepid water

*for the bread:*

500g unbleached all-purpose flour  
340g water  
125g levain (*less than the amount prepared above*)  
10g sea salt

*Prepare the levain:* Pinch ¼ cup of your stiff levain and place in a bowl with 50 mL water. Mash the levain with a whisk until it dissolves, then add both types of flour and stir. Turn the mixture onto a work surface and knead to fully incorporate the flour. Place the levain in a covered container and let it sit at room temperature (70 to 76°) for 8-12 hours or until it has doubled in volume and the surface is domed.

*Make the bread:* Pour the water into a large mixing bowl or the bowl stand mixer. Combine the flours until all the ingredients are incorporated. Cover and let it rest for 20 minutes, while the flour hydrates. Uncover the dough, add the salt and the levain and incorporate with your hands or a spatula using a few firm strokes. Knead the dough with the dough hook by mixing on low speed (2 on a KitchenAid) for a minute. Increase speed to medium (4 on a KitchenAid) and knead until smooth and muscular; an additional 8 to 9 minutes. Transfer the rounded dough to a lightly oiled container, preferably clear, so you can mark the level of the dough with a masking tape. Let the dough ferment until doubled in size, 3 to 4 hours at a temperature of 70 to 75 F.

*Shape the crown.* Cover a surface with a little flour. Place the risen dough over the counter and roll it very gently into a long fat rope, about 8 inches long and 3 inches wide. Connect the ends of the rope overlapping by about 4 inches. Press the ends together to seal. Dust a ring baking pan with flour and carefully drop the shaped dough inside. Allow it to proof at 70 to 75 F until it looks pillowy, 1 to 1 and a half hours. When you press your finger tip into the dough, it should spring back slowly. As the bread proofs, heat your oven to 425 F and place a large roasting pan, without the lid, inside.

*Bake the bread.* Once the bread is proofed, slash the outer edge of the round with a razor blade, and place the ring pan inside the roasting pan, and close with the lid slightly moist with tap water. Bake covered for 30 minutes, uncover, remove the ring pan from the oven, carefully invert it to remove the bread, and finish baking the bread sitting on the oven rack, for 15 to 20 more minutes. Let it cool completely on a rack before slicing through.