

CHESTNUT SOURDOUGH BREAD

(from Farine's blog)

(makes 4 small loaves)

For the prefermented dough

175 g mature white starter

494 g unbleached all-purpose flour

258 g water

26 g raw wheat germ (I used toasted)

12 g salt

For the final dough

750 g unbleached all-purpose flour

400 g chestnut flour

700 g water

450 g fermented white dough

5 g instant dry yeast

25 g salt

200 g whole, peeled cooked chestnuts, crumbled into chunks

For the fermented dough

Mix flour, water and white starter until the flour is well hydrated, cover with a cloth and let rest 20 minutes. Add salt and mix until you get a gluten window (when you stretch some of the dough really thin, you see strands of gluten and almost-see through spots). Put in an oiled bowl and cover tightly.

Let rise at room temperature for about two hours, then put in the fridge for up to 48 hours

Remove from the fridge at least two hours before using

For the final dough

Combine the flours in the bowl of the mixer, add the water and mix well. Cover with a cloth and let rest for 30 minutes

Add the fermented dough and yeast and mix until the dough is smooth and elastic. Sprinkle the salt over it and mix some more.

Very lightly flour your work surface. Place your dough on it, rough-side up, and flatten it out with your fingers. Spread the chestnut pieces over the top and press them well into the dough. Fold a few times so that all the chestnuts are incorporated into the dough. Form the dough into a ball, put it into an oiled bowl, cover with a cloth and let it rest for 40 minutes.

Lightly flour your work surface again, and turn the dough out on it. Fold the dough (on all four sides), then put back into your bowl, cover with baking cloth and let it rest for another 20 minutes. Lightly flour your work surface again, turn out the dough and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Shape as desired.

Place on a semolina dusted parchment paper over a sheet pan. Let rise, covered with baking cloths, for 1 ½ hour or until just doubled in volume.

Meanwhile turn on the oven to 500°F/250°C with a baking stone in it and an empty cast iron (or metal) pan on the bottom shelf. When ready to bake, score the breads the way you like, pour 1 cup of water in the cast iron (or metal) pan and slide the breads (still on their parchment paper) onto the baking stone, spray some water into the oven and close the door quickly.

After 5 minutes, turn the oven down to 440°F/220°C and bake for another 20 minutes. Check to see if the loaves need to be turned around or if they need to switch places, then bake for another 10 minutes as needed

Let cool on a rack.