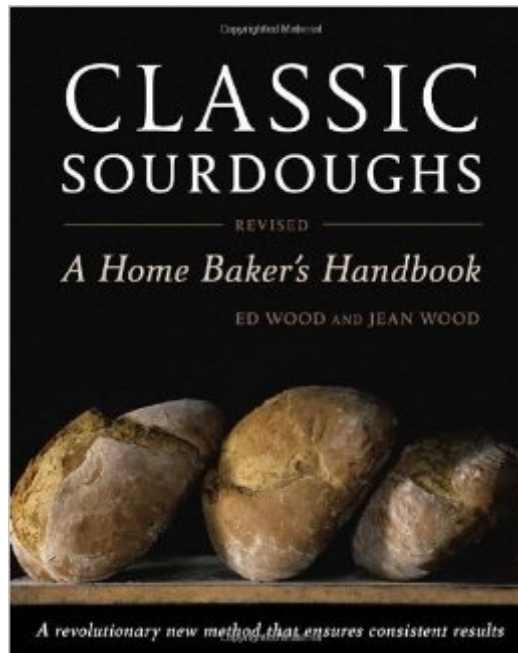


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# Classic Sourdoughs, Revised: A Home Baker's Handbook



## Synopsis

Sourdough: The Gold Standard of Bread <sup>Â</sup> More and more home bakers are replacing mass-produced breads and commercial yeasts in favor of artisan breads made with wild cultures and natural fermentation. Whether you want to capture your own local yeasts, take advantage of established cultures like San Francisco Sourdough, or simply bake healthier, more natural loaves, you<sup>â</sup>™ll find no better guides than renowned sourdough authorities Ed and Jean Wood. <sup>Â</sup> In this updated edition of *Classic Sourdoughs*, the Woods reveal their newly discovered secret to crafting the perfect loaf: by introducing a unique culture-proofing step and adjusting the temperature of the proofs, home bakers can control the sourness and leavening like never before. The reward? Fresh, hot sourdough emerging from the oven just the way you like it<sup>â</sup>™ every time. Starting with their signature Basic Sourdough loaf, the Woods present recipes featuring rustic grains and modern flavors, including Herb Spelt Bread, Prairie Flax Bread, and Malt Beer Bread, along with new no-knead versions of classics like White French Bread. They round out the collection with recipes for homemade baguettes, bagels, English muffins, and cinnamon rolls, plus a chapter on baking authentic sourdoughs in bread machines. <sup>Â</sup> Steeped in tradition, nuanced in flavor, and wonderfully ritualized in preparation, sourdough is bread the way it was meant to be. So join the sourdough renaissance and bring these time-honored traditions into your own kitchen.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I looked at many other sourdough cookbooks and only found one other that did not list recipes asking for commercial bakers yeast. I wanted real sourdough recipes so selected this book and

"Wild Bread: Hand-baked sourdough artisan breads in your own kitchen" by Lisa Rayner. This book has far more recipes than the book by Lisa Rayner. It is nice to have both selections but if I had to select only one, this would be the one I would pick and is the one I recommend to close friends just getting started using sourdough. The recipe selection is fantastic. The only thing I could see missing from this book was dessert items but those can be found on the web. The chocolate sourdough cake recipe offered by King Arthur Flour Company's web-site is very good as long as you know they are looking for starter with a thick pancake batter consistency. I was really glad to have a copy of this book after getting my starter. It really helped answer the question of, "Now what do I do with it?" I am very anxious to try the waffle recipes. I can say the pizza dough recipe turned out better than the previous recipes I have tried and the challah recipe makes one huge challah. I don't see a need for the proofing box Wood recommends, particularly during the warmer months but otherwise I am loving this book. He does not suggest fancy equipment and the recipes so far have been excellent. Honestly, a canning jar with starter and a copy of this book would be an excellent gift for those who enjoy baking and those who enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Update: Jan 2013, still using this book and a Danish dough wisk and the King Arthur flour sourdough starter stored in the King Arthur sourdough crock. I mostly use the no knead recipe as it is so easy with a Danish dough wisk. The wisk was an purchase too.

This is an excellent reference for home bakers who want to understand how to create authentic sourdough breads. It's not complicated and does not require any special equipment. The original edition of this book has long been one of my favorites, and I really like the updated information in the revised edition. One of the biggest improvements is the simplified directions in the chapter "Putting It All Together". In my opinion this is the heart of the book. In just a few pages it explains very clearly what is happening in your sourdough culture and how to handle it correctly. It made me a better baker, and I am having more fun experimenting with recipes and adapting them to my taste. Another great addition is the "No-Knead Sourdough" recipe section. I was intrigued by the simplicity of the basic recipe. It worked beautifully for me. And with a slight adjustment to the loaf proof (lower temperature, longer time) I can now easily fit baking fresh sourdough bread into my weekday work schedule. The recipe worked equally well for rye bread. My favorite recipe section in the book is probably also the most unique - the one on Middle Eastern breads. It's brought to life by the authors' personal experiences from living and traveling in the Middle East. I love making fresh "Khbuz Arabi" (pita bread) when we have guests. They bake in just 5 minutes, the guests love watching them puff up, and they are delicious hot out of the oven. For a perfectly authentic version,

and extra food for conversation, you could use the author's "La Giza" culture, collected from an ethnic bakery in Egypt. At the end of the book is a small section that describes the sourdough cultures collected by the authors and available on their website (Sourdoughs International). It does not come across as a pitch but rather as sharing their passion for the history and variety of sourdough cultures. I grew up in Germany on excellent rye and whole grain sourdough breads. Many years ago when I moved to the US and experienced serious bread withdrawal, I got Ed Wood's "New Zealand Culture for rye" and have been baking with it ever since. It makes fantastic rustic rye breads, though I tend to omit the extra ingredients (molasses, milk, and butter) listed in the book's rye recipes. Now Ed Wood has a new Polish rye sourdough culture and I am tempted to try it.

Had been baking my own bread for a couple of years and wanted to try baking with true sourdoughs. With this book and the San Francisco starter sold on the author's website, was able to activate the starter and bake some wonderful breads. Don't think I'll ever be going back to baking with commercial yeast. The book was quite readable and contained information that you just won't easily find anywhere else. Wood discusses different grains, gives tips on how to bring your starter back if it goes south, describes different starters, and provides a nice collection of recipes. If you are going to experiment with sourdough, this is a book you'll turn to again and again. As an aside, the San Francisco sourdough culture makes a great bread, but I'm itching to try the Russian starter that according to Wood works well with whole wheat. Will update this review once I receive that order and turn out a few trial loaves. Hard pressed to say if this book, or the one by Lisa Rayner is the absolute best one on the market for sourdoughs. They both have their great points. I'd go out on a limb though and say that if I could buy just one, this would be it. Read the book, order a starter. You'll soon be enjoying breads with wonderful crust and a chewy texture that just can't be duplicated with commercial yeast. Update: One of the big challenges for me is making a palatable whole wheat bread with more than 50% whole wheat. Anything more than that and it's likely you will get a heavy, flat, dense bread. My San Francisco sourdough had that limitation as well. Last week I tried a Russian sourdough culture. Made two loaves that were 100% whole wheat. The loaves rose well and were not dense. For me that's a big milestone. Now I want to go from a completely whole wheat bread to incorporating the ancient grains such as Einkorn, Emmer, and Spelt. Should be even better for me, nutrition wise. (Emmer and Spelt IIRC have higher amounts of proteins, phosphorous, and etc.)

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