

# Smoked Paprika Sourdough

Makes 1 boule. Like most sourdough recipes, this recipe includes very long fermentation and proving times and is intended to be refrigerated overnight and baked the next day.

## Ingredients

1-1/2 cups filtered water  
1 cup active sourdough starter (stir out bubbles before measuring volume)  
4-1/2 cups bread flour, plus more as needed  
2-1/2 tsp smoked paprika  
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper  
2 tsp salt  
vegetable oil  
cornmeal

## Steps

Gather sourdough starter from your main supply to use as the levain. Leave out to warm until it becomes spongy and active.

Add water and levain to a large mixing bowl and stir to dissolve starter. Add flour, paprika, cayenne, and salt and stir to form a shaggy dough. Tip dough onto a floured surface and knead until dough is smooth and passes the window pane test (if using a stand mixer, mix with a dough hook until the dough forms a ball). Add more flour (possibly a lot more) if too sticky.

Transfer dough to a lightly oiled bowl, cover with a tea towel, and let ferment for 4–8 hours (longer fermentation leads to more sour flavor).

Shape dough into a boule by gathering in the sides and place seam-side up into a well-floured bowl. Leave at room temperature for 1 hour to expand, then transfer to a refrigerator overnight (8–12 hours). In the refrigerator it should expand slightly and the surface should dry.

Preheat oven to 450° F and leave a roasting tray on the bottom rack to warm.

Dust the surface of a large baking sheet or a bread cloche with cornmeal (this prevents the bread from sticking). Carefully invert the dough ball onto the surface, making sure not to knock the air out of it. Score the loaf with a very sharp knife or a bread lame, then tent with foil or place the cover on the cloche (this prevents the surface from browning too quickly).

Transfer baking sheet or cloche to oven and immediately pour cold water onto the heated roasting tray to create steam (this gives the bread a crispy outer crust). Bake for 30 minutes, then remove the cover and continue to bake for another 15 minutes (replace cover if the surface begins to get too dark).

The finished loaf should sound hollow when knocked on. When done, turn off the oven and leave the door ajar for a few minutes (removing the loaf immediately may cause it to contract). Remove baked loaf to a wire rack and allow to cool completely before slicing.