

THE SOURDOUGH FORMULA

Recipe 8 · Spelt Country Loaf

Spelt makes the sweetest, nuttiest crumb. My farmers market people go straight for it.

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Why people buy it: spelt is the «ancient grain» people seek out for flavor and an easier-feeling bread, and almost no grocery store sells a fresh sourdough with it.

- **Tier & price:** Everyday · Classic (premium) · **$12**
- **Makes:** 1 round or oval loaf, about 950 g of dough
- **Difficulty:** Medium
- **Timeline:** Friday 8 am feed → 4 pm mix → gentle folds, shorter bulk → shape around 8:30 pm → fridge 8–12 h → Saturday 6–7 am bake

Ingredients

Ingredient	Grams	Cups (approx.)
Bread flour	300 g	2⅓ cups + 1 tbsp
Whole spelt flour	200 g	1¾ cups
Water, 78 °F (26 °C)	340 g	1⅓ cups + 2 tsp
Active starter	100 g	½ cup
Fine sea salt	10 g	1¾ tsp
Rice flour, for the banneton	a spoonful	1 tbsp

What changes vs. the Master Loaf

- **40 % whole spelt.** Spelt gluten is stretchy but fragile: it extends easily and tears if you push it. So hydration goes **down to 68 %**, and handling gets gentler.
- **Short autolyse:** 20 minutes is plenty.
- **3 gentle sets of folds**, using coil folds (lift from the middle and let the ends tuck under) instead of strong stretches.
- **Shorter bulk and cold proof.** Stop bulk at +50 % and cold proof 8–12 hours.
- **Spelt price:** I use bulk-bin or online whole spelt at about $2.50 a pound.

Steps

1. **The morning feed:** feed Dolly at 8 am.

2. **Mix** the water and both flours gently until combined. Autolyse **20 minutes** (Master Loaf step 1).
3. **Add the starter, then the salt** (Master Loaf step 2), squeezing gently.
4. **Coil folds: 3 sets**, 30 minutes apart. Wet both hands, slide them under the middle of the dough, lift until the dough stretches and the ends fall and fold under. Turn the container a quarter and repeat once more. That's one set.
5. **Bulk** at 75 °F (24 °C) until it has grown about 50 %, 3½–4½ hours from mixing. Spelt moves fast.
6. **Pre-shape** loosely and rest 15 minutes (Master Loaf step 5).
7. **Final shape** with a light, confident hand (Master Loaf step 6). Two or three drags on the counter are enough; spelt tears if you overwork it.
8. **Cold proof 8–12 hours** (Master Loaf step 7).
9. **Score and bake** as Master Loaf step 8. Spelt browns quickly and beautifully, so check at 18 minutes lid off. Internal 205–210 °F (96–99 °C).
10. **Cool** 2 hours before cutting or bagging.

Shaping, scoring & baking specifics

- **Score:** spelt opens wide rather than tall, so a single long slash or a simple wheat-stalk pattern (small angled snips along a center line) looks lovely.
- **Banneton:** a batard shape gives spelt more support than a round. If your boules spread, switch to oval.
- **Same Dutch oven bake** as the Master Loaf.

Cost & Price

Ingredient	Amount	Cost
Bread flour	300 g	$0.36
Whole spelt flour	200 g	$1.10
Starter (with feed)	100 g	$0.25
Salt	10 g	$0.01
Rice flour (dusting)	1 tbsp	$0.05
Oven share	½ bake	$0.46
Total ingredients		**$2.23**
Packaging (bag, label, twine)	1 set	$0.35
Sell at		**$12.00**
You keep		**$9.42**

How to sell it

Foodies, ancient-grain fans, people who say regular bread «doesn't sit well». Describe the flavor (sweet, nutty) and let them decide; never make health claims on your menu or label.

Menu line to copy: *Spelt Country Sourdough. Made with whole spelt, an ancient grain with a sweet, nutty flavor and a tender crumb. $12*

> ***Sarah's tip: Spelt is the loaf where less is more. The first time I treated it gently instead of «building strength», it doubled in the oven.***

If it goes wrong

- **Flat, wide loaf:** over-proofed or overhandled. Shorter bulk, shorter cold proof, gentler folds.
- **Dough tears when shaping:** you're pulling too hard. Shape with fewer, softer movements.
- **Dense crumb:** too little fermentation. Let bulk reach a clear +50 % with visible bubbles.