

THE SOURDOUGH FORMULA

Recipe 22 · Chocolate Cherry

The loaf that made a regular cry a little. In a good way.

Recipe 22 · Chocolate Cherry

Why people buy it: a deep cocoa crumb with tart cherries and melty chocolate. It is dessert, breakfast and a gift in one loaf.

- **Tier & price:** Specialty premium · $15
- **Makes:** one boule
- **Difficulty:** Medium. Cocoa changes how the dough feels.
- **Timeline:** soak cherries Friday at 3:30 pm → mix 4 pm → bake Saturday 7 am

Ingredients

- 500 g bread flour (about 4 cups)
- 25 g unsweetened cocoa powder (¼ cup)
- 370 g water (1½ cups + 4 tsp) — 20 g extra for the cocoa
- 100 g active starter
- 10 g salt (1¾ tsp)
- 20 g honey (1 Tbsp)
- 100 g dried cherries (⅔ cup)
- 100 g dark chocolate chips (heaped ½ cup)

What changes vs. the Master Loaf

Cocoa drinks water. For every 25 g of cocoa, add about 20 g of extra water, or the dough will feel stiff and the loaf will come out tight. Whisk the cocoa into the flour so you get no dry pockets.

Soak the dried fruit: cover the cherries with warm water for 20–30 minutes, drain and pat dry. Dry fruit pulls water out of the dough; soaked fruit stays juicy and keeps your crumb soft.

Steps

1. Give Dolly the morning feed.
2. Whisk flour and cocoa. Mix with 350 g of the water and the honey. Autolyse 30 minutes (Master Loaf step 1).
3. Add the starter, then the salt with the remaining 20 g water (step 2).

4. First set of stretch & folds.
5. **Laminate during the 2nd set:** stretch thin, scatter the soaked cherries and the chocolate chips (straight from the fridge so they do not smear), letter-fold, roll up.
6. Sets 3 and 4 as coil folds. Cocoa dough rises a little slower: bulk may take 30–60 minutes longer (step 4). Look for +50–75 %, not the clock.
7. Master Loaf steps 5–7.
8. Dust with flour before scoring so the cuts show against the dark crust. A single deep slash or a heart looks lovely here.
9. Bake as in step 8 but lower the lid-off stage to 425 °F (220 °C): cocoa and honey brown faster. You cannot judge doneness by color, so use the thermometer: 205 °F (96 °C).
10. Cool 2 full hours. Melted chocolate needs to set.

Cost & Price

Ingredient	Amount	Cost
Master Loaf base (flour, salt, starter food)	1 loaf	$1.40
Cocoa powder	25 g	$0.44
Dried cherries	100 g	$2.65
Chocolate chips	100 g	$1.10
Honey	20 g	$0.26
Total ingredients		**$5.85**
Packaging		$0.35
Sell at		**$15**
You keep		**$8.80**

How to sell it

- **Who buys it:** gift-givers, chocolate lovers, Valentine's and Mother's Day orders, the regular who «doesn't really like sourdough».
- **Menu line to copy:** *Chocolate Cherry sourdough: a dark cocoa loaf full of tart cherries and pools of dark chocolate. Lightly sweet, seriously addictive.*

- **Best day/season:** February and the gifting months; it also sells as a «treat yourself» Friday special.

> *Sarah's tip: Suggest it toasted with salted butter. It is the loaf people buy two of: one for home and one to give away.*

If it goes wrong

- **Tight, heavy crumb:** not enough water for the cocoa, or bulk cut short. Add the 20 g and wait for the rise.
- **Chocolate smeared into gray streaks:** chips were warm. Chill them first.
- **Burnt bottom:** put a baking sheet on the rack under the Dutch oven for the lid-off stage.