

THE SOURDOUGH FORMULA

Recipe 26 · Fig & Walnut

My cheese-board loaf. Sliced thin, it disappears.

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Why people buy it: it is the bakery-café loaf people pay $16 for in the city, and it makes any cheese board look expensive.

- **Tier & price:** Specialty premium · $15
- **Makes:** one batard (best shape for thin slices)
- **Difficulty:** Medium
- **Timeline:** soak figs Friday 3:30 pm → mix 4 pm → bake Saturday 7 am

Ingredients

- Master Loaf dough: 450 g bread flour + 50 g whole wheat flour (about 4 cups total), 350 g water (1½ cups), 100 g active starter, 10 g salt (1¾ tsp)
- 20 g honey (1 Tbsp), added with the water
- 100 g dried figs (about ⅔ cup), stems off, quartered (dried figs run about $8/lb)
- 80 g walnuts (¾ cup), lightly toasted and roughly broken

What changes vs. the Master Loaf

A little whole wheat for a nutty flavor, and two inclusions that both need a quick prep.

Soak the figs: cover the quartered figs with warm water for 20–30 minutes, drain and pat dry. Dried fruit steals water from the dough; soaked fruit stays soft and the crumb stays moist.

Toast the walnuts: 8 minutes at 350 °F (175 °C). Cool completely. Toasting removes bitterness and keeps them crunchy.

Steps

1. Give Dolly the morning feed.
2. Mix both flours, water and honey. Autolyse 30 minutes (Master Loaf step 1).
3. Add the starter, then the salt (step 2). First set of stretch & folds (step 3).
4. **Laminate during the 2nd set:** stretch thin, scatter the figs and walnuts evenly to the edges. Letter-fold and roll up.
5. Sets 3 and 4 as coil folds. Fruit and nuts make the dough a little heavier; bulk to a full +50–75 %.

6. Master Loaf steps 5–7, shaping a batard.
7. Score one long slash at a 30° angle for a big ear.
8. Bake as in step 8. Honey and figs color the crust darker: lid-off at 450 °F (230 °C), and if it browns early, slip a sheet pan under the Dutch oven.
9. Cool 2 hours.

Cost & Price

Ingredient	Amount	Cost
Master Loaf base (flour, salt, starter food)	1 loaf	$1.40
Dried figs	100 g	$1.76
Walnuts	80 g	$1.59
Honey	20 g	$0.26
Total ingredients		**$5.01**
Packaging		$0.35
Sell at		**$15**
You keep		**$9.64**

How to sell it

- **Who buys it:** wine-and-cheese people, hostess-gift buyers, the regular who always asks «what's new?»
- **Menu line to copy:** *Fig & Walnut sourdough: honey-sweet figs and toasted walnuts in a nutty, crackly loaf. Slice it thin for your cheese board.*
- **Best day/season:** fall and winter, gatherings and gifting. Pair it with a wedge-of-brie suggestion on the tag.

> ***Sarah's tip: Sell it pre-sliced in a clear bag for $1 more. Cheese-board buyers love not having to slice a crusty loaf in front of guests.***

If it goes wrong

- **Purple-gray crumb near the walnuts:** that is natural tannin from walnut skins. Toasting reduces it; it tastes great either way.
- **Dry, tight crumb:** figs were not soaked. Soak them.
- **Too sweet for cheese:** drop the honey; figs bring plenty.