

JANUARY

Dutch Oven Bread

For our first lesson of 2021 in the Better Baking Academy with Bob's Red Mill, we took on a classic no-knead Dutch oven bread. This bread recipe is a favorite for a reason: bakers can make a supremely crisp, chewy, and flavorful loaf of bread with little to no effort on their part. Our Dutch Oven Bread receives a hearty boost from Bob's Red Mill Artisan Bread Flour and Bob's Red Mill Stone Ground Whole Wheat Flour. Beyond offering you a foolproof base recipe, we'll take you through each step of the process, from shaping your boule to how to add mix-ins and how to make the most of your trusty Dutch oven!



INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

Great recipes require great ingredients. Here's how each of our recipe's six simple ingredients contributes to making an epic loaf.

BOB'S RED MILL ARTISAN BREAD FLOUR: The distinctive chew of a Dutch oven loaf calls for a high-protein flour. Bob's Red Mill Artisan Bread Flour offers plenty of protein to create a tight network of gluten. Even without the process of kneading, this strong flour will help give your bread plenty of sturdy structure and toothsome bite.

BOB'S RED MILL STONE GROUND WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR: A hearty and earthy flavor booster, Bob's Red Mill Stone Ground Whole Wheat Flour adds a note of complexity to our Dutch Oven Bread. The term "whole wheat" refers to the fact that the whole wheat kernel gets ground into the flour. With other flours, the bran and germ are removed before the wheat is ground. The bran and germ impart plenty of nutrition and nutty flavor, adding a two-for-one bonus to our bread loaf.

KOSHER SALT: As a general rule of thumb, the ratio of salt to flour in breads is 1.8% to 2% of flour weight. It's important to weigh your salt because different salt crystals measure differently. Dough without enough salt easily overferments. Salt also helps with crust color and enhances flavor.

INSTANT YEAST: In contrast to active dry yeast, instant yeast contains 25% more living yeast cells because it is processed more gently. A single-celled organism, yeast will grow and multiply when it receives the following: moisture, food (sugar and carbs), and warmth. It leavens the dough by converting carbohydrates into carbon dioxide gas and alcohol.

WATER: Moisture, in the form of warm water, is needed to activate the yeast. It also hydrates the dough so the gluten can develop, converting to steam in the oven to help leaven the dough and prevent the crust from forming too quickly and burning.

BOB'S RED MILL SEMOLINA FLOUR: Rather than going in the dough, we use Bob's Red Mill Semolina Flour for dusting specifically the bottom of our Dutch oven bread. Why? When breads are baked at a very high temperature, like pizza dough or our no-knead bread loaf, the bottoms can scorch and stick to your pizza stone or the bottom of your Dutch oven. A protective barrier of cornmeal or semolina flour helps protect your loaf from this pitfall. We prefer semolina flour over cornmeal for its finer texture, allowing all the crunch to come from the crust, not the cornmeal.



DUTCH OVEN
BREAD



DUTCH OVEN BREAD

Makes 1 loaf

A classic no-knead bread dough recipe should be as easy as it sounds, with quality ingredients, time, and a Dutch oven doing all the work. This amazing recipe is no exception. Made with an earthy combination of Bob's Red Mill Artisan Bread Flour and Bob's Red Mill Stone Ground Whole Wheat Flour, our bread dough spends most of its time in the refrigerator, slowly fermenting and building flavor. Then, when it's ready, we pop it into a piping hot Dutch oven, creating an unbelievably crisp crust and chewy crumb that rivals the best boules from a bakery.

3½ cups (445 grams) Bob's Red Mill Artisan Bread Flour, plus more for dusting

1¼ cups (156 grams) Bob's Red Mill Stone Ground Whole Wheat Flour

4 teaspoons (12 grams) kosher salt

2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast

2 cups (480 grams) warm water (105°F/41°C to 110°F/43°C)

Bob's Red Mill Semolina Flour, for dusting

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together bread flour, whole wheat flour, salt, and yeast. (Add mix-ins, if using.) Add 2 cups (480 grams) warm water; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until a sticky dough forms, about 30 seconds.

2. Lightly spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1½ to 2 hours. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or preferably overnight.

3. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface. Using floured hands, lightly press dough into a 1-inch-thick oval. Grab bottom edge, and gently stretch and fold bottom third over to center. Stretch right side out, and fold right third over to center; repeat with left side. Finish by folding top third over previous folds. Roll loaf away from you seam side down, and using both hands, cup dough and pull it toward you to seal. Turn dough 90 degrees, and pull again until a tight, smooth boule forms. Place, seam side up, in a banneton (proofing basket) or a medium bowl lined with a kitchen towel heavily dusted with bread flour. Loosely cover dough with towel, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 1 to 1½ hours.

4. When dough has 30 minutes left to rise, place Dutch oven and lid in cold oven. Preheat oven to 500°F (260°C).

5. Dust a piece of parchment paper with semolina flour, and turn out dough seam side down. Score dough, if desired. Carefully remove hot Dutch oven from oven; remove lid, and place dough, on parchment, in Dutch oven. Cover with lid, and place back in oven.

6. Immediately reduce oven temperature to 425°F (220°C). Bake for 25 minutes. Remove lid, and bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of loaf registers 200°F (93°C), 20 to 30 minutes more. Immediately remove loaf from Dutch oven, and let cool completely on a wire rack before slicing or storing.



MIX-IN MATRIX

Mix and match your favorite flavors to create your ideal Dutch Oven Bread with our guide

MIX-IN	PREP	AMOUNT	SUGGESTIONS	PRO TIP
CHEESE	Shred block or wedge cheese, regularly or finely, or cut into ½-inch cubes.	7- to 8-ounce block or wedge (all shredded, all cubed, or mix half shredded and half cubed) (198 to 226 grams)	Gruyère, Cheddar, Parmesan, fontina, Gouda, Monterey Jack, Havarti	We recommend buying blocks or wedges of cheese rather than preshredded cheese, as preshredded cheese is often coated in potato starch and natamycin (an antimold agent). These compounds can affect the way the cheese melts and is distributed in your bread loaf, so when shopping, reach for the block or wedge rather than the bag.
FRESH HERBS	Roughly chop your herbs.	<p>Mixed Herbs: ½ cup (16 grams), about 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons (4 grams) strong herbs and ¼ cup (12 grams) mild herbs</p> <p>Strong Herbs: 2½ tablespoons (8 grams)</p> <p>Mild Herbs: ½ cup (24 grams)</p>	<p>Strong Herbs: thyme, rosemary, dill, tarragon</p> <p>Mild Herbs: basil, parsley, chives</p>	Remember to properly wash and pat dry your fresh herbs before chopping.
DRIED HERBS	Use dried leaves, not ground herbs.	<p>Strong Herbs: 2 teaspoons (4 grams)</p> <p>Mild Herbs: 2 tablespoons (12 grams)</p>	<p>Strong Herbs: oregano, parsley, rosemary, herbes de Provence</p> <p>Mild Herbs: basil</p>	Dried herbs, like spices, will lose their pungency over time, so check to make sure you're using herbs that haven't exceeded their expiration date.
SEEDS	Soak seeds in 1 cup (240 grams) hot water (160°F/71°C) for 30 minutes. Drain before using.	½ cup (64 grams) (before soaking)	poppy, sesame (black or white), flax, pumpkin, caraway, sunflower, fennel, cumin	Seeds absorb a lot of water, so after soaking, they will be more than 40 grams heavier and increase in size. This keeps the seeds from taking excess moisture from the bread.
NUTS	Roughly chop and soak raw nuts in 1 cup (240 grams) hot water (160°F/71°C) for 30 minutes. Drain before using.	1½ cups (170 grams) (before soaking)	pecans, walnuts, almonds, pistachios	Much like seeds, nuts also absorb quite a bit of liquid, so they will be heavier and larger after soaking. This keeps the nuts from taking excess moisture from the bread.
DRIED FRUIT	Chop if large and then soak in 1 cup (240 grams) hot water (160°F/71°C) for 30 minutes. Drain before using.	1½ cups (192 grams) (before soaking)	cherries, dates, cranberries, figs, apricots, sun-dried tomato, candied orange peel	Dried fruit will plump up once soaked in the hot water, giving it a better texture in the final loaf. Soaking keeps the dried fruit from taking excess moisture from the bread.

MIX-IN MATRIX (CONTINUED)

Mix and match your favorite flavors to create your ideal Dutch Oven Bread with our guide

MIX-IN	PREP	AMOUNT	SUGGESTIONS	PRO TIP
VEGETABLES	Chop into ¼-inch pieces. (If using peppers, stem and seed them.) Cook over medium heat in 1 tablespoon (14 grams) butter or oil for 8 to 10 minutes to remove excess moisture and temper flavor. Sautéing the vegetables is recommended but not absolutely necessary, but if you decide not to sauté, you'll need to reduce the amount. (See Amount.)	¾ cup (about 203 grams) sautéed vegetables, ½ cup (about 75 grams) diced raw vegetables	jalapeño, onion, shallots, green onion, bell pepper, garlic Exceptions: Jalapeño is not recommended for sautéing, as it dulls its natural flavor. For garlic, we recommend using 1 small head of roasted garlic.	To make roasted garlic: Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Cut ¼ inch off top end of 1 small head of garlic, keeping cloves intact. Place garlic, cut side up, on foil. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon (5 grams) olive oil, and sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon kosher salt; wrap garlic in foil. Bake until soft, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let cool completely. Squeeze pulp into a small bowl.
FRUIT	Cut fruit into ¼-inch pieces (leave skin on). If using citrus, use the zest.	1 cup (125 grams) diced fruit, 2 tablespoons (20 grams) tightly packed zest	Fruit: apples, pear Citrus zest: lemon, orange, lime	When zesting citrus, make sure to zest the outer peel. The white part, also known as the pith, is bitter and will affect the flavor of your bread.
SPICES	Use ground spices, not whole.	2 teaspoons (4 grams) to 1 tablespoon (6 grams) Exception: everything bagel seasoning: 2 tablespoons (16 grams)	black pepper, red pepper (crushed or ground), cinnamon, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, allspice, everything bagel seasoning, garlic powder, onion powder	Keep in mind that many brands of everything bagel seasoning come with salt added, so when adding the seasoning to your dough, adjust the salt content accordingly.
JARRED CONDIMENTS	Drain and rinse, if packed in oily brine. Drain and pat dry if packed in water. Roughly chop if large.	½ cups (202 grams)	pickled jalapeños, candied jalapeños, roasted red peppers, pimientos, olives, banana peppers, pepperoncini peppers	Make sure to rinse condiments packed in oil. The excess oil will affect the flavor and texture of your loaf.
TOPPINGS	Brush loaf with water before sprinkling on toppings.	1 tablespoon (8 grams)	oats (old-fashioned oats, steel-cut oats), millet, seeds, everything bagel seasoning	Score your bread loaf after you've added your toppings so they don't fall into the cuts.

MAGICAL MIX-IN COMBOS

See how we made our own wild creations, following the handy mix-in matrix



CINNAMON PECAN & DRIED FIG DUTCH OVEN BREAD

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (85 grams) pecans, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (96 grams) dried figs, chopped
- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon

PRO TIP

When 2 large mix-ins are used, you divide each mix-in amount in half. Pecans and figs can be soaked together in hot water (160°F/71°C) for 30 minutes. Drain well.



DILL HAVARTI DUTCH OVEN BREAD

- 8 ounces (226 grams) Havarti cheese, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons (8 grams) chopped fresh dill

PRO TIP

Larger mix-ins make it harder to shape. If you are new to shaping, start with mix-ins that are not large in size (shredded cheese, herbs, seeds, etc.) and work your way up to larger mix-ins (cubed cheese, nuts, dried fruit, etc.).



HERB & OLIVE DUTCH OVEN BREAD

- 2 teaspoons (4 grams) herbes de Provence
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (202 grams) kalamata olives, roughly chopped



EVERYTHING JALAPEÑO DUTCH OVEN BREAD

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (75 grams) $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-diced seeded fresh jalapeños
- 2 tablespoons (16 grams) everything bagel seasoning, plus 1 tablespoon (8 grams) on top

PRO TIP

Brush boule with water before sprinkling with everything bagel seasoning and then score.



SESAME ORANGE DUTCH OVEN BREAD

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (64 grams) sesame seeds (half black, half white)
- 2 tablespoons (20 grams) tightly packed orange zest

COLD FERMENTATION CRASH COURSE

Learn the microbial magic behind our no-knead Dutch oven bread's tangy, sophisticated flavor



THE SCIENCE

Before shaping or baking, your dough needs a nice cold rest. Why? Yeasted dough resting at room temperature works quickly to build rise (carbon dioxide) but not flavor (byproducts like alcohol). By placing your dough in the refrigerator, you're casting your yeast under a lethargic spell, making it work much, much slower. It'll still puff up, but now, you're getting a boost in flavorful compounds. So, how long should you cold ferment? Ideally from 2 hours to overnight. Two hours is the bare minimum amount of time you owe your dough. The yeast has had enough time to do the bulk of its job, but expect a tighter crumb and less developed flavor than an overnight-fermented (about 18 hours) dough. After an overnight ferment, flavor has already vastly improved, with the yeast slowly consuming sugar and generating its two essential byproducts: bubbly carbon dioxide (which affects the rise of your dough) and tangy alcohol (which affects the flavor).

SHAPE YOUR DOUGH: ROUND

Use gentle tucks, folds, and rolls to create a perfect domed boule



1. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface. Using floured hands, lightly press dough into a 1-inch-thick oval.



2. Grab bottom edge, and gently stretch and fold bottom third over to center. Stretch right side out, and fold right third over to center; repeat with left side. Finish by folding top third over previous folds.



3. Roll loaf away from you seam side down, and using both hands, cup dough and pull it toward you to seal.



4. Turn dough 90 degrees, and pull again until a tight, smooth boule forms.



5. Place, seam side up, in a banneton (proofing basket) or a medium bowl lined with a kitchen towel heavily dusted with bread flour. Loosely cover dough with towel, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 1 to 1½ hours.



SHAPE YOUR DOUGH: OVAL

Use gentle tucks, folds, and rolls to create a perfect domed batard



1. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface. Using floured hands, lightly press dough into a 1-inch-thick oval.



2. Grab bottom edge, and gently stretch and fold bottom third over to center. Stretch right side out, and fold right third over to center; repeat with left side. Finish by folding top third over previous folds.



3. Roll loaf away from you seam side down, and using both hands, cup dough and pull it toward you to seal. The way you cup the dough here determines the oval shape. As opposed to rounding your hands around it, keep your fingers straight and box the loaf in rather than cupping around it.



4. Turn dough 180 degrees, and pull again until a tight, smooth batard forms.



5. Place, seam side up, in an oval banneton (proofing basket) or place, seam side down, on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper dusted with semolina flour. Loosely cover dough with towel, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 1 to 1½ hours.

DUTCH OVEN 101

Pick the best pot for the job



THE SCIENCE

Baking bread in a Dutch oven creates a high-heat environment that quickly kills the yeast and forces the bread to rapidly release its gases into an intense wave of steam, a process known as oven spring. Industrial ovens used in professional bakeries do this naturally, but at home, we need help from the Dutch oven lid to trap the steam in with the bread, hydrating the dough, effectively conducting heat, and helping it gain extra height. The steam also interacts with the starches on the bread's surface, creating a crust with a subtle gloss. It leads to an epicly crusted and crumbed loaf every time.

MATERIAL

You have two main choices: an enamel-coated cast-iron Dutch oven or a traditional black cast-iron Dutch oven. The difference is in the coating, but the results will remain the same as long as you have a well-seasoned pot. You just need a lid to cover it and the proper heat-conducting cast-iron material, and your bread will come out perfectly every time.

SIZE & SHAPE

Look for a 6- to 7-quart round or oval Dutch oven. Anything much smaller will keep the bread from rising properly and crust from forming. The 6- and 7-quart sizes yield the perfect round shape, with plenty of springy height. We prefer the round shape to accommodate a round boule, but oval will work as well, just shape your loaf into an oval. (See Shape Your Boule: Oval.)

HOW TO SCORE

Learn how to slice your dough for beautiful results



WHY

When we score, or slice, our dough, we're creating a "weak spot," making sure that the gases that rapidly release during oven spring will push in a chosen direction instead of producing an irregularly bubbled top. It's not crucial, but it makes for a lovely loaf.

TOOLS

You'll need an exquisitely sharp blade, like a knife, razor blade, or lame (pronounced "lahm"). We prefer the lame because you can replace the disposable blade as it dulls, and the handle gives you the best ease of movement and feels like an artist's stylus.

METHOD

Confidence is key. Decisive, shallow ($\frac{1}{4}$ - to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-deep) strokes with the blade ensure that the slits in the dough don't appear jagged or irregular. Hold your blade at a 45 degree angle and use a light touch, as too much pressure will pop the air bubbles within.

DESIGN

The beauty of no-knead Dutch oven bread is its simplicity. But an expertly scored loaf offers home bakers a chance to add their unique signature. Start with a basic scoring pattern. A simple arched slash on the side creates a lunar-lip shape, or as the French refer to it, *la grigne*, "the grin" of the loaf. Also popular is the three-slash pattern, where three distinct slices are made across the middle of the loaf.

FROM PREHEAT TO BAKING

You've formed and shaped your dough. Now, it's time to bake.



1. When dough has 30 minutes left to rise, place Dutch oven and lid in cold oven. Preheat oven to 500°F (260°C). The revolutionary power of the Dutch oven lies in its ability to create a high-heat environment that forces the bread to rapidly release its gases into an intense wave of steam, a process known as oven spring. Don't let it sit in the oven past 30 minutes, or the Dutch oven will scorch the bottom of your loaf.

2. Dust a piece of parchment paper with semolina flour, and turn out dough seam side down. Score dough, if desired. Carefully remove hot Dutch oven from oven; remove lid, and place dough, on parchment, in Dutch oven. You're about to seal your dough in this hot Dutch oven—but why? The lid traps the steam in with the bread, hydrating the dough, effectively conducting heat, and helping it gain extra height. The steam also interacts with the starches on the bread's surface, creating a glossy crust. During the process of oven spring, rapid growth in your bread is powered by active gases rushing up and toward the weak spots in the dough. By creating your own “weak spot” through scoring, you're channeling the gases

to push in your chosen direction instead of producing an irregularly bubbled top. However, this isn't essential, and if you decide not to score, you'll still end up with a beautiful loaf.

3. Immediately reduce oven temperature to 425°F (220°C). You needed that first blast of intense heat to get your Dutch oven as hot as possible for that gift of oven spring. Mission accomplished. Now, you need to cut the temperature back down so you don't burn your bread.

4. Remove lid, and bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of loaf registers 200°F (93°C), 20 to 30 minutes more. We want dark-crust loaves, and without direct exposure to heat, you'll get a pale loaf. Remove the top to allow the crust to color.

5. Immediately remove loaf from Dutch oven, and let cool completely on a wire rack before slicing or storing. A full cooldown rewards the bread baker with better taste and texture. This has to do with starch retrograde, where water continues to evaporate from the loaf, firming up the crumb and creating its pleasantly chewy texture.