

Jim Lahey's No-Knead Bread



Adapted from [Jim Lahey](#) | [My Bread](#) |
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This is it, folks. The basic no-knead bread recipe by Jim Lahey that incited an insurrection among bread bakers everywhere. It's an adaptation of Lahey's phenomenally and outrageously lovely "football-shaped pugliese" sold at Sullivan Street Bakery in Manhattan.

As easy as this recipe is, Lahey cautions that it's not exactly an impromptu sorta thing. "This bread is incredibly simple and involves little labor, but you need to plan ahead. Although mixing takes almost no time, the first rise requires from 12 to 18 hours. Then you'll need to shape the dough and let it rise for another 1 to 2 hours. The longer rise tends to result in a richer bread, but you need the patience and the schedule to do it. After preheating the oven and the pot, you've got 30 minutes of covered baking, another 15 to 30 of uncovered baking, and about an hour of cooling. And please, don't gulp down that first slice. Think of the first bite as you would the first taste of a glass of wine: smell it (there should be that touch of maltiness), chew it slowly to appreciate its almost meaty texture,

and sense where it came from in its hint of wheat. Enjoy it. You baked it, and you did a good job."

Lahey took great care to include as many tips and tricks in this no-knead bread recipe as he possibly could to ensure you have spectacularly satisfying results at home. Don't rush through this recipe and skim the details. Each word, each visual cue, each explanation has meaning. Rely on the description of how the dough should appear or feel more than the timing, seeing as conditions vary from kitchen to kitchen. And know that, as Lahey says, "Even the loaves that aren't what you'd regard as perfect are way better than fine." No argument from us on that.

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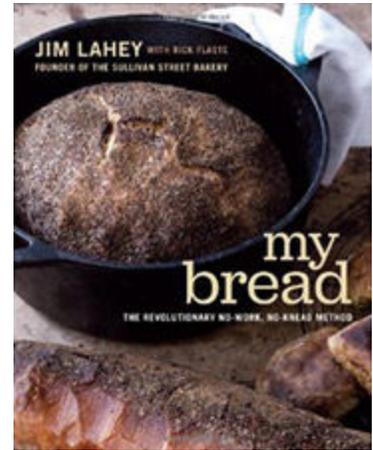
- Quick Glance
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- One 1 1/2-pound loaf

Ingredients

- 3 cups (400 grams) all-purpose or bread flour, plus more for the work surface
- 1/4 teaspoon (1 gram) instant yeast
- 1 1/4 teaspoons (8 grams) salt
- Cornmeal or wheat bran, as needed

Directions

1. In a large bowl, stir together the flour, yeast, and salt. Add 1 5/8 cups (320 milliliters or 320 grams) water and mix with a wooden spoon or your hand until you have a wet, sticky dough. This should take roughly 30 seconds. You want it to be really sticky. (Many people who bake this bread find the dough to be unusually wet. Remember that most of the water is meant to be released as steam during baking. Besides, you'll be handling the dough very little, so you don't have to worry about your hand looking like some creepy monster that just crawled out of a lagoon.)
2. Cover the dough and bowl with a plate, towel, or plastic wrap and set aside to rest at warm room temperature (but not in direct sunlight) for at least 12 hours and preferably about 18 hours. (Ideally, you want the room to be about 72°F. In the dead of winter, when the dough will tend to rise more slowly, as long as 24 hours may be necessary.) You'll know the dough is properly fermented and ready because its surface will be dotted with bubbles and take on a darkened appearance. This long, slow fermentation is what yields the bread's rich flavor.
3. Generously flour your work surface. Use a bowl scraper or rubber spatula to turn the dough onto the surface in one blob. The dough will cling to the bowl in long, thread-like strands and it will be quite loose and sticky. This is exactly what you want. Do not add more flour. Instead use lightly floured hands to gently and quickly lift the edges of the dough in toward the center, effectively folding the dough over onto itself. Nudge and tuck in the edges of the dough to make it round. That's it. Don't knead the dough.
4. Generously coat a cotton towel (not terry cloth) with flour, wheat bran, or cornmeal. Place the dough, seam side down, on the towel and dust the surface with a little more flour, bran, or cornmeal. Cover the dough with another cotton towel and let it rise for about 2 hours. When it's ready, the dough will be more than double in size and will hold the impression of your fingertip when you poke it lightly, making an indentation. If the dough readily springs back when you poke it, let it rise for another 15 minutes.
5. A half hour before the dough is done with its second rise, preheat the oven to 450°F (232°C). Adjust the oven rack to the lower third position and place a 6- to 8-quart heavy pot and its lid (whether cast iron or enamel, Pyrex or ceramic) in the oven as it heats.



- 6. When the dough is done with its second rise, carefully remove the pot from the oven and uncover it. Also uncover the dough. Lift up the dough and quickly but gently turn it over into the pot, seam side up, being very careful not to touch the pot. The blob of dough may look like a mess, but trust us, everything is O.K. Cover the pot with its lid and bake for 30 minutes.
- 7. Remove the lid and bake until the loaf is beautifully browned to a deep chestnut color, 15 to 30 minutes more. Use a heatproof spatula or pot holders to carefully lift the bread out of the pot and place it on a wire rack. Don't slice or tear into it until it has cooled, which usually takes at least an hour.