einkorn baking

Ins and outs of baking with the healthier ancient wheat!
Baking with Healthier Ancient Wheat

If you've been eating breads baked from whole grain flours, you've probably noticed there are some sacrifices you make when baking with ancient, low-gluten grains.

Maybe your breads, muffins, and cookies are heavy, don't rise quite right, or have that slightly off-putting "healthy" flavor.

Maybe you've had trouble getting your kids or spouse to embrace healthy eating because the foods "look weird".

And maybe there are times when you've give your right arm for just one light, luscious, moist bite of chocolate cake covered with oozy-gooey frosting.

Have You Ever Wondered If That's Just the Price You Pay for Eating A Traditional Foods Diet In These Modern Times?

Over the years of cooking and feeding my family a traditional foods diet, I've wondered the same thing. I wanted to eat right, but boy, did I miss those delicious baked goods!

I started wondering:

What if there was a healthy grain that was easy on your tummy, light tasting, and had that beautiful look of breads baked with modern wheat?

So last year, I tried something new.

And what happened next changed everything about how I bake forever…

How a 5,000-Year-Old Grain Found A New Home In A Modern Kitchen

Hi, My name is Wardee Harmon.

I’m the author of The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Fermenting Foods. I am also the lead teacher for Traditional Cooking School.

It's an online cooking school I created to honor my grandmother’s cooking traditions and preserve them so that future generations can enjoy the health benefits, flavors and fun of traditionally prepared foods.

Now back to my story...

About a year ago, I decided to start experimenting with einkorn.

What’s einkorn? Einkorn is civilization’s first wheat. It was grown by farmers 5,000 years ago. And it has quickly found a permanent home in my family’s kitchen.

Why? Because it has a gentler, older form of gluten that is closest to what God originally intended for us to eat. Most people digest it better than modern wheat. And many people find that it doesn’t trigger their seasonal allergies like modern wheat can.
The Overwhelming Evidence For Giving Einkorn A Try

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There are some other great things about einkorn, too:

- Einkorn’s starch goes into your blood more slowly, so it won’t spike your blood sugar like other grains.
- It contains half the phytic acid of modern wheat. That means it won’t block mineral absorption in your body or cause mineral deficiencies. (And when you soak, sprout or sour your dough, phytic acid is reduced even more, so you’re way ahead of the game in eliminating mineral deficiencies.)
- Einkorn contains the oldest (and gentler) form of gluten. So you get beautiful loaves without the tummy troubles of modern wheat.

That’s a lot, but there are some other benefits to einkorn that modern wheat can’t touch.

- Einkorn boosts immunity, and helps prevent cancer and heart disease, because it contains three to four times more beta-carotene than modern wheat.
- It supports healthy eyes, reproductive organs and prevention of many cancers, because it contains two times more vitamin A than modern wheat.
- It helps prevent macular degeneration and cataracts, because it contains three to four times more lutein than modern wheat.
- It helps your body create energy and slow down aging, because it contains four to five times more riboflavin than modern wheat.
- It is a “hulled” wheat, that makes it ideal for growing organically. That means you don’t have to worry about stray chemical contamination and insects.

Well, that was more than enough to get me interested in baking with einkorn so I gave it a whirl. Literally.

I Put It All In A Blender And Gave It A Whirl

And while I was excited about helping my family enjoy the health benefits of fresh-ground flour, my biggest joy came from feeling more connected to my family heritage. This is where my grandmother comes into the story:

I grew up hearing my Dad’s stories about my Tata Wardeh. (She’s his mother and my grandmother.)

In their village in Israel, all the families shared a common mill, and each mother would go there to mill enough whole wheat flour to bake pocket bread for the week.

So when I milled my own flour — even though it wasn’t on the village stone mill — I felt connected to how things used to be and oh-so-excited to bring that experience into our modern-day family.

And we haven’t looked back! It’s been more than 10 years now that our family has enjoyed baked goods from fresh-ground whole grains.

Today, our grain of choice is einkorn. It’s been a full year since we switched to exclusively baking with einkorn, and we’ve never been happier. (And honestly, I love getting compliments from friends and family who never would have tried my baked goods in the past.)

On the following pages, you’ll get my recipe for No-Knead Sourdough Artisan Einkorn Bread — the bread my husband says is the best bread he’s ever eaten! It’s really that good. In case you don’t have a sourdough starter, check out page 8 and following for my easy how-to.

No-Knead Artisan Sourdough Einkorn Bread
No-Knead Artisan Sourdough Einkorn Bread
No-Knead Artisan Sourdough Einkorn Bread

Though I have many food favorites, the no-knead sourdough method I’m about to introduce to you really takes the cake!

You can probably make 99 percent of the breads for your household with this one dough. Like the no-knead sourdough of my Sourdough A to Z eCourse and eBook, this dough is versatile and can yield artisan loaves, sandwich loaves, dinner rolls, English muffins, French bread, flatbreads, cinnamon rolls and more!

In the recipe below, I’ll show you how to make the no-knead sourdough einkorn artisan loaf.

The Notes: No-Knead Artisan Sourdough Einkorn Bread

This method is adapted from Carla Bartolucci in the Einkorn cookbook. She gave me permission to share it with you, and I’m so grateful.

Before we dive in, let’s talk about some particulars of this method.

First, I always weigh out my flour for this recipe. This ensures very consistent results, no matter if the flour is fresh-ground and fluffy or has been sitting around for awhile and is more compact.

Second, you can use all-purpose (sifted) einkorn flour or whole-grain einkorn flour, or a blend of the two. With all-purpose or a blend, you’re going to have a wetter dough, as well as a lighter bread that rises better. With whole-grain, you’re going to get an easier-to-handle, drier dough; however, it can be more dense and not rise as well (though I have a trick for this, which I’ll describe soon). Our family prefers the whole-grain bread — it’s chewy, dense, flavorful, soft, and with my rising trick (below), it rises beautifully. My husband says it’s the best bread he’s ever had, anywhere.

Third, here’s my secret to getting your whole-grain dough to rise well, I work baking soda into the dough before shaping it for it’s final 30-minute rise. The baking soda provides an instant lift because it reacts with the acids in the dough that are a result of the sourdough starter. It works beautifully!

Finally, let’s talk equipment. Here’s where your artisan loaf will be the best possible if you can bake it inside a Dutch oven or clay baker. (Visit the Recommended Resources page for links.) This gives the bread a very hot environment — essential for poof and a good crust — but it’s small and moist so your bread doesn’t completely dry out.

The other piece of equipment you need is a linen couche cloth. You’ll line a colander with it, sprinkle in some flour, and put your artisan loaf in it to rise. If you don’t have a couche cloth, then use a well-floured tea towel.

Ready to begin making a beautiful no-knead artisan loaf? I’ll share more tips as I walk you through the recipe.
The Recipe: No-Knead Sourdough Einkorn Artisan Bread

After making the switch to einkorn for our family’s baking, I’ve experimented with different brands. My absolute favorite is from einkorn.com because it creates really soft bread with amazing flavor and a beautiful warm brown color. I’d recommend trying it!

Psst… members of Traditional Cooking School get free shipping forever on flours and einkorn berries from einkorn.com via our private member resource page.

Ready for the recipe? Do make sure you’ve read the notes on the previous page for even more detail about this method.

‣ 6 cups all-purpose or whole-grain einkorn flour, or a blend (720 g)
‣ 1-1/2 teaspoons sea salt (10 g)
‣ 1/4 cup sourdough starter (60 g) — see page 8 and following for how to make one
‣ 2 cups warm water
‣ 1 teaspoon baking soda

Yields 1 loaf.

Combine flour, sea salt, sourdough starter and water in a medium-size mixing bowl. Mix together until it makes a shaggy dough. Cover with plastic wrap and let sour overnight, or for 5 to 8 hours.

When souring time is over, the dough will have firmed up but will still be sticky. Preheat oven to 450 degrees Fahrenheit for at least a half-hour, with your Dutch oven or clay baker inside to pre-heat as well.

Meanwhile (while oven is preheating), flour your countertop well. Scrape the dough from the bowl onto the floured surface. Break up the baking soda, then sprinkle about 1 teaspoon over the dough. If any of the baking soda is still in chunks, pinch them with your finger.

Now begin to work in additional flour and the baking soda by folding and rotating the dough over and over — about 20 to 30 folds. The dough should now be pretty handleable. Keep it in a circular shape.

Line a colander with a linen couche — not in the center of the cloth but toward one end of it so that half of it is free to fold over the top when the dough is in it. (Don’t fold it yet.) Sprinkle the cloth with flour. Transfer the dough into the couche with the folds of the dough on the top side. Sprinkle more flour on top. Fold the linen couche free end over the dough. Let the dough rise/rest for 30 minutes.

When the rising and pre-heating time is over, get the Dutch oven (or clay baker) out of the oven. Take the lid off and sprinkle flour in the bottom.

Tip the loaf out of the couche into the Dutch oven so that the folded sides are now underneath. Cover the Dutch oven and put it back in the oven.

Turn the temperature down to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. Bake for about 45 minutes, until the loaf is dark golden brown and sounds hollow when tapped.
Transfer the loaf to a baking rack that’s lined with a tea towel. Fold the towel around the loaf. Let cool wrapped in the towel for 2 hours before slicing it. (Wrapping in the towel softens the crust; if you want it really crusty, don’t wrap it in the towel.)

See “How to Slice Your Artisan Loaf” on the next page.
How to Slice Your Artisan Loaf

Slice off one end about 3/4-inch thick. Then rotate the loaf a bit less than 90 degrees and make a similar slice, slightly less than perpendicular to the first slice. Then go back to where you made the first slice and cut another slice of your desired thickness. Repeat, alternating slicing in the 2 locations, like the photo at right shows.

You can slice the entire loaf at once, but it will stay fresh longer if you only slice what you need. This loaf fits conveniently in a gallon-size resealable bag — and freezes well if you wish to bake ahead. Enjoy!

Want More?

If you grabbed this free einkorn recipe, you might be looking for more help with einkorn baking. You want to make beautiful, light-tasting breads, cakes, and down-home family meals... without blood sugar spikes, mineral deficiencies, gluten troubles, or that heavy “health food“ taste. Right?

For a limited time, I’ve created a special offer just for you, if you are ready to make beautiful, light-tasting baked goods to delight your friends and family, without sacrificing the health benefits of traditional foods.

We have an entire online course on Einkorn Baking and you can access it for FREE (along with a dozen plus other eCourses, weekly menu plans, private group support, and more) with your free 30-day trial of Traditional Cooking School's premium membership.

Go here for more information or to claim your free trial today: http://tradcookschool.com/pula

I'll see you inside!

—Wardee Harmon from Traditional Cooking School by GNOWFGLINS
http://TraditionalCookingSchool.com

No-Knead Artisan Sourdough Einkorn Bread
How To Make Your Einkorn Sourdough Starter
Einkorn Sourdough Starter

Of all the traditional grain preparation methods (soaking, sprouting, souring), sourdough is the most effective to prepare grains for best digestion and nutrition. That’s just one reason I love using sourdough and rely on it for nearly all our baking.

There are other reasons, too — how beautifully sourdough leavens baked goods because of the action of the wild yeasts in the starter. And of course, the flavor: A delightful tang just can’t be beat!

In just a bit, I’m going to help you understand how to start your own einkorn sourdough starter and how to care for it. We’ll also go over the differences between an einkorn starter and other grain-based starters. First, though…

Why Sourdough?

This is a quick recap of the nutritional benefits we cover in depth in Traditional Cooking School’s Fundamentals and Sourdough eCourses. Here’s why you should embrace sourdough in your traditional kitchen (provided you can eat grains and gluten).

1. **It’s the most nutritious.** If done right*, sourdough is the most effective grain preparation, surpassing the effectiveness of soaking or sprouting. The wild yeasts and bacteria in the starter pre-digest gluten, consume grain sugar and neutralize anti-nutrients such as phytic acid and enzyme inhibitors. Einkorn is already easier to digest and has less phytic acid than newer grains, so if you combine this ancient grain with the power of sourdough, you end up with marvelously digestible and nutritious baked goods!

   “What do I mean by “if done right”? There’s a difference between modern sourdough recipes you might find on the Internet and true traditional sourdough. A truly nutritious sourdough recipe, like any of ours, will include three important things: 1) At the beginning of the recipe, all the flour is combined with the starter for the entirety of the souring time, except perhaps for a bit of flour used for rolling or handling later on; 2) the souring time will be done in a warm location, which is essential for the sourdough starter to do its important work; and 3) the souring duration will be long enough, usually 5 to 24 hours, depending on temperature (the warmer the location, the faster the souring time can be).

2. **The power of natural leavening.** It’s amazing really — the wild yeasts in your sourdough starter are powerful. They produce gases as they eat the starch in einkorn, and this actually rises your dough. No need to purchase store-bought yeast because your sourdough starter does the job. It’s beautiful to watch and simply like taking part in a miracle — miracles which could happen daily in your kitchen!

3. **The taste.** Myself, I love a good tang, and sourdough delivers. However, sourdough doesn’t have to be overly sour. If your family doesn’t care for sour, add a bit of baking soda to the batter or dough right before baking, because baking soda reacts with the acid of the sourdough to “sweeten” the dough. This and other tips for reducing the sour can be found in this blog post — [6 Tips to Prevent “Sour” Sourdough](#). Not to scare you, though, because most sourdough recipes are not overly sour anyway!
What’s a Sourdough Starter?

In order to use sourdough in your kitchen, you need a sourdough starter. This is a batter-like mixture of flour and water that you feed and care for regularly in order to cultivate an active colony of wild yeasts and beneficial bacteria right inside it (it’s microscopic).

You use some of the sourdough starter in your baking (by combining it with flour and other ingredients), always making sure to reserve a portion of it that you keep going through regular feedings of more flour and water.

Sound intimidating? No need. It’s not hard and soon it becomes like a cherished member of your family. Often people name their starters! I never have, but maybe I should. :-)

Unique Qualities of the Einkorn Sourdough Starter

If you have experience with sourdough, it may have been with a wheat or rye starter. The care and feeding (and even starting) of these starters is similar to an einkorn sourdough starter.

Their behavior, however, is different. It comes down to three things.

First, since einkorn absorbs less water, the starter tends to be runnier. You can easily adjust for this by adding a bit more flour or a bit less water at each feeding. Which, by the way, is a good idea. Because a starter on the thicker side works better in our recipes.

Second, while a whole wheat or rye starter will often double or triple in size at its peak (the height of activity), einkorn simply does not. So don’t rely on height for signs that it’s doing well. Instead, use the other signs of an active starter to gauge your starter’s health — that it’s bubbly, domes slightly, produces hooch (yellow liquid), and smells fresh and sour.

Finally, an einkorn starter is a bit stringy. Nothing wrong with this; it’s just the way it is.

Your Very Own Einkorn Sourdough Starter

Want an einkorn sourdough starter? I hope you said yes!

You’ve got two options. You can either transition another sourdough starter over to einkorn flour, or you can start a fresh einkorn starter. I’ll describe both options below.

Starter Option #1: Transition Starter

Instead of feeding your existing sourdough starter with whole wheat, rye or spelt (or other grain), simply switch to feeding it with einkorn. You will need to use more flour than before (or less water) to keep it the same thickness, and you may also need to give it a few days to transition and adjust to the new food source.
Starter Option #2: Brand-New Einkorn Starter

These are the same instructions as in Traditional Cooking School’s Sourdough eCourse. You’ll find no differences except that you should be a bit generous with the flour amount (to have a thicker batter) and you shouldn’t expect the einkorn starter to double or triple in size.

To start your einkorn starter, you need:

- einkorn flour
- well or filtered water (not city water)
- pint-size jar
- plastic wrap or paper towel and rubber band


Feeding One. 12 hours later, if you don’t see life, stir again. Scrape sides. Cover and allow to sit for 12 more hours.

If you do see life (a few bubbles), add 1/4 cup water to the jar. Stir well. Add 3/8 cup flour. Stir vigorously. Scrape and cover. Set aside for 12 hours.

Feeding Two. 12 hours later, if you still don’t see signs of life, dump out this mixture and start again.

If you do see life (a few more bubbles), remove 1/2 of the starter, add 1/4 cup water, and stir. Add 3/8 cup flour and stir. Scrape and cover. Allow to sit for 12 or so hours.

Feeding Three. Remove 1/2 of the starter. Add 1/4 cup water and stir. Add 3/8 cup flour and stir. Scrape and cover. Allow to sit for 12 or so hours.

Feeding Four. Remove 1/2 of the starter. Add 1/4 cup water and stir. Add 3/8 cup flour and stir. Scrape and cover. Allow to sit for 12 or so hours.

Feeding Five, Six, Seven ... Continue with this routine until your starter consistently shows signs of life (bubbles, hooch and domed), and is at least five to seven days old.

If, after day three or more, your starter does not show much activity 12 hours after its discard/feeding, try giving it a good stir without discarding and feeding. Sometimes this pause gives the organisms a chance to catch up and the starter an opportunity to take off.

Signs of an Active Starter

An active starter has these qualities: It’s bubbly, domes slightly, produces hooch (yellow liquid), and smells fresh and sour.
What to Do Now?

Keep feeding your starter regularly — twice a day (or more if you have hot weather).

If it’s a brand-new starter, you can use your starter in recipes after a few days of good activity. However, it’s not mature yet. Maturity (a strong culture of wild yeasts and bacteria) comes in several weeks of good care and regular activity. So keep up its care, and it will take care of you for many years!

If you wish, after it’s mature, you can put it in the refrigerator for up to a week at a time. Only store a small amount. Feed it, give it an hour or so to consume some of the food, then put in the fridge in a loosely-covered jar or bowl. After it’s completely chilled, you can come back and close the jar/bowl completely. Each week, take it out of the fridge and feed it, letting it come to room temperature so the organisms can revive and refresh. Either use it in baking or put back in the fridge for another weeklong break.

But Einkorn Is Expensive!

Einkorn is more expensive, and people often ask me if there’s any way to avoid wasting it on feeding a starter. My answer is that if you’re smart about your feedings, there is absolutely no waste.

Because here’s the thing. You feed your starter just enough so that you have what you need for a recipe and a bit to reserve. Nothing goes in the compost, nothing goes down the drain. If you find you have more starter than you’re using, you cut back on how much you’re feeding and maintaining. Likewise, if you find you don’t have enough starter for your recipes, you feed more. The point is: You feed how much you need, not more or not less. No waste.

If even that amount of einkorn breaks the bank, you can consider feeding your starter with whole wheat or rye or spelt. (Provided you don’t have gut or gluten issues.) Then reserve your more expensive einkorn flour for the actual recipe.

Psst… members of Traditional Cooking School get free shipping forever on flours and einkorn berries through our private member resource page.

Your Notes

Please use this space to makes notes on this lesson, or to jot down any questions that arise.