



A BAKE-KEEPER FREE PRINTABLE

Glossary of Sourdough Terms

New to the vocabulary? Keep this open while you read any of our guides.

Autolyse

Resting flour and water alone before mixing in starter and salt, for easier gluten development.

Banneton

A proofing basket that holds the loaf's shape while it rises.

Bulk fermentation (bulk)

The first rise, right after mixing, before shaping.

Cold retard

Slowing fermentation by proofing in the fridge, usually overnight.

Crumb

The interior texture of baked bread.

Discard

Starter removed at feeding time so the jar doesn't overflow.

Ear

The crisp flap that lifts along a score line during baking.

False rise

A starter that looks active from gas bubbles but isn't strong enough to leaven bread.

Float test

Dropping a spoonful of starter in water; floating suggests it's ready to use.

Gluten

The stretchy protein network that traps gas and gives bread its structure.

Hooch

The liquid (mostly alcohol) that separates on top of a hungry starter.

Hydration

The ratio of water to flour by weight, expressed as a percentage.

Lame

A blade used to score dough before baking.

Levain

A portion of starter built up specifically to leaven one bake.

Oven spring

The rapid rise a loaf gets in the first minutes of baking.

Proofing

The final rise after shaping, before baking.

Scoring

Cutting the surface of dough so it expands predictably in the oven.

Starter

The living flour-and-water culture that leavens the bread.

Tang

The sour flavor sourdough is named for, from bacteria in the starter.

Windowpane test

Stretching dough thin enough to see light through it, to check gluten development.