SPROUT IT FROM THE RAFTERS

Sourdough:

WITH YOKE MARDEWI OF WILD SOURDOUGH

Sourdough baker Yoke Mardewi walks us through her sprouted quinoa spelt sourdough loaf and explains how technique and fermentation plays a pivotal role in releasing nutrients from grain.

IMAGES TIM LOFTHOUSE AND KARIN CALVERT

SOAK

Soak at room temperature for 24 hours in a container with a lid

With a professional background spanning dentistry, fashion and corporate banking, Yoke Mardewi's path to baking has been unorthodox, to say the least.

Unhappy in a high paying job driving strategic projects in the financial sector, Yoke knew a good round of sourdough baking would lift her spirits. However, it wasn't until she quit her job to look after her one-and-a-half year old daughter that she realised her passion for fermentation could become commercially viable.

After years of trial and error, the primarily self-taught baker now runs classes for home baking enthusiasts and professionals keen to expand their sourdough offering to include wholegrain and sprouted grains. She also teaches a range of bakery staples, including flatbreads, crackers, bagels, baguettes and pastries, along with an extensive gluten-free range.

"I love the magic of sourdough – how you can create so many different breads with just flour, water and a little salt," Yoke says, acknowledging she is heavily influenced by organic and biodynamic food principles.

Recognising the burgeoning demand for 'real' bread with a nutritional profile, as well as "free-from" health claims, Yoke added sprouted quinoa spelt sourdough loaf to her masterclass calendar – and the response from the baking community has been overwhelmingly positive.

"The benefits of sprouted grains are definitely beginning to become common knowledge. Unlike processed grains, which we would find in a lot of other breads in the market, sprouting grains unlocks the nutrients, minerals and enzymes in grains which makes it highly accessible to the human body. The nutrients in the sprouted grains are increased many-fold, providing an extremely nutritious and valuable part of any healthy diet," she says.

"As well as being very digestible, sprouts are a good source of fibre and protein and are high in vitamins and minerals. For example, sunflower sprouts are high in vitamins A and C, while mung sprouts are high in vitamin C, iron, and potassium."

"Quinoa is not actually a cereal grain, but a grass seed related to spinach and amaranth. It has a mild, nutty flavour and is very high in protein. However, its seeds have a coating of bitter-tasting saponin, a soap-like substance, which is toxic and hard to digest. It also does not contribute to good taste. So, it is important to rinse the quinoa seeds several times prior to soaking.

"I chose spelt rather than wheat because it is the ancient or unhybridised form of wheat, which is easier to digest and contains less fructose than wheat or rye, hence it is a part of the FODMAP diet for those people with irritable digestion."

A champion of the "new baker revolution", as she puts it, Yoke is confident raising the standard of Australian sourdough will keep the industry alive and well.

"Cheating with yeasts, fast proofing using high temperature and baking pale loaves will not make a delicious chewy complex-tasting sourdough that is easy to digest, low in GI and good for your body and soul," she says.

"You will be surprised how much your customer is willing to pay for truly delicious and healthy bread".

"Besides, rising sourdough slowly allows us bakers to get a proper sleep at night," she says, laughing.

Looking forwards, Yoke hopes to expand her sourdough masterclass business around Australia and perhaps even franchise.

"I do not have that much time to travel to teach classes because of my school-aged daughter, so my plan is to clone myself and teach someone else who is as passionate as I am to teach over on the east coast," she says.

"I am just waiting for retired or burnt out bakers to come on board – I can guarantee the will have a social life again!

"Making sourdough is very de-stressing and it brings sunshine into peoples lives. Who knows, we could even work sourdough baking into team building workshops, and use baking as a tool to communicate with people and to improve their lives."

RECIPE

Makes 10-12 loaves.
This recipe can be scaled.

Sprouting quinoa:

- 375g: quinoa grains, black or brown or white or a mix is fine
- Filtered water

1. Rinse, preferably with filtered water several times until the soapy residues disappear.
2. Soak at room temperature for 24 hours in a container with a lid. Make sure you stir the quinoa well.
3. Rinse, preferably with filtered water several times.
4. Put the soaked quinoa grains in a colander above the sink.

STARTER

Put the lid on or cover the starter to ferment until it becomes fully active

MIX

Mix ingredients on a low speed for 5-7 minutes

LOOK

The mixture will look dry at the beginning but the final dough mixture will look slightly wet

STRETCH

Stretch and fold the dough 2 or 3 times

5. Spray with filtered water several times a day to keep the grains moist.
6. The quinoa grains should start to sprout within 24-48 hours.
7. Drain well before using.
8. Sprouted grains can be kept in the fridge for a few days or in the freezer for up to a month.

DOUGH:

Wet ingredients:

- 1kg: wholemeal spelt starter culture, active/ bubbly (100 per cent hydration)
- 2-2.25kg: filtered water at room temperature
- 300g/1tbs: un-sulphured liquid barley malt (optional)
- 750g sprouted quinoa (from above)

Dry ingredients:

- 2kg: organic white spelt
- 2kg: organic wholemeal spelt
- 80g: non-iodised sea salt

Optional toppings: sprouted quinoa grains

1. **Measure ingredients:** Beginning with the starter, weigh and place the wet ingredients including the sprouted quinoa into the dough machine bowl. Then weigh and add your dry ingredients, except salt.
2. **Mix ingredients:** Mix on a low speed for 5-7 minutes. The mixture will look dry at the beginning but the final dough mixture will look slightly wet (use the extra 250g water if you prefer a wetter dough). Do not worry if the dough does not look homogeneous/ well mixed at this stage.
3. **Starter:** Put the lid on or cover the starter to ferment until it becomes fully active.
4. **Knead:** Add salt to the mixture and knead the dough on a low-medium speed for another 5-7 minutes until the dough pulls away from the bowl. Less is better here. As soon as the dough pulls away from the bowl, turn the machine off. The resulting dough may stick slightly to your finger, but it should not be overly wet. Resist the temptation to add flour.

REST

Let the dough sit for 15-20 minutes to relax the gluten

5. **Bulk rise or overnight retardation:** Unload the dough into a container with a lid to rise for 2-3 hours at a comfortable room temperature, around 20°C-25°C. Alternatively, retard the dough overnight in a cold fridge (below 5°C). Note: I strongly recommend retarding the dough overnight, rather than a short bulk rise.
6. **Thaw:** If retarding overnight, thaw out the dough for an hour or two, until the dough feels soft.
7. **Stretch and fold:** Stretch and fold the dough 2-3 times (and no more than 3 times). Your dough will feel taut.
8. **Rest:** Let the dough sit for 15-20 minutes to relax the gluten.
9. **Divide and shape:** Weigh the dough to your desired shape and size.
10. **Final rise/double the dough volume:** Mist the shaped dough with water and rise the shaped dough covered with plastic or floured linen at a comfortable room temperature, around 20°C -25°C, until almost doubled. Mist the rising loaf with water frequently to prevent drying. Alternatively, put the shaped dough inside a proofer at 20-28°C until doubled. This loaf can even be risen in your chiller overnight. You can adjust the proofing temperature to meet your time requirement.
11. **Preheat your oven** to 225°C-235°C when your dough is almost doubled. Please adjust the oven temperature to suit your commercial oven.
12. **Bake:** Bake for 10-12 minutes at 225°C-235°C, then reduce the oven to 205°C for a further 20-25 minutes until the dough is dark brown. If you are unsure if the loaf has cooked through, turn the oven off and let it sit in the oven for 10 minutes. Remove loaves from the oven.
13. **Cool on racks**.
14. **Eat:** The loaves are best eaten fresh, but will keep moist for two to three days. They are suitable for freezing and will keep for a couple of months frozen.

RISE

Rise the shaped dough covered with plastic or floured linen at a comfortable room temperature

BAKE

Bake for 10-12 minutes at 225°C-235°C, then reduce the oven

NOTE ON SOURDOUGH STARTER:

If you do not have a sourdough starter ready, make your own by mixing wholemeal spelt and water (100 per cent hydration) in a container with a lid. Leave it in a warm place for a day or two until it develops bubbles. Throw out half and refresh (feed) daily for a week, to develop a pleasant and robust starter.

Do not use yeast to start your starter – this will lessen the quality of your final sourdough loaves, including the taste, texture and nutritional profile.

Alternatively, you can purchase Wild Sourdough rye starter from Yoke's website, www.wildsourdough.com.au.

The starter comes with instructions to transform it into a spelt starter. For example, you can feed the rye starter with wholemeal spelt (100 per cent hydration) and it will become a spelt starter within 6-12 hours.

FIND OUT MORE:

Yoke has published several books on sourdough, including *Wild Sourdough* and *Sourdough – from pastries to gluten free wholegrains*, as well as apps and ebooks for Thermomix.

Hardcopy and electronic versions are available through Yoke's website: www.wildsourdough.com.au.

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EAT

The loaves are best eaten fresh, but will keep moist for 2-3 days