

The Sourdough Journey

How to Evenly Laminate Add-ins in Sourdough Bread

Many sourdough bakers add inclusions or “add-ins” to their sourdough bread. However, it is difficult to evenly distribute the add-ins without overhandling and de-gassing the dough. The following technique demonstrates how to evenly distribute add-ins in a batch of dough in one step. The process essentially creates an “8-layer sandwich” with exactly the same quantity of add-ins distributed evenly in 8 layers between 9 layers of dough. As the dough continues fermenting and rising, the layers of add-ins will amalgamate into the layers of dough and you generally will not see the visible layers or “stripes” in the final loaf.

When is the best time to incorporate the add-ins? Most bakers add them in the middle or at the end of the bulk fermentation handling steps. For example, if you are doing a series of five stretch and folds, most bakers recommend incorporating the add-ins sometime after the first two stretch and folds.

The method described below uses a “lamination” technique for incorporating the add-ins.

Because this method evenly distributes the add-ins, I recommend doing it as the **last** handling step in bulk fermentation. In the example above this step would replace the 5th stretch and fold and assumes the dough will continue rising for some time and bulk fermentation completes. It is possible to use this method at any time in bulk fermentation. Use the timing that works best for you.

Step 1: Divide your add-ins into 8 equal portions.



Step 2: Stretch your dough into a large square. The dough should be thick enough so the add-ins do not penetrate it, but thin enough that you can stack it into 9 layers of height. (This will take some practice).



Step 3: Spread three portions of the add-ins down the center of the dough.



Step 4: Fold the right side of the dough over the add-in you just added.



Step 5: Spread three portions of the add-ins **on top** of the flap you just folded over.



Step 6: Fold the left side of the dough over the add-ins you just added.



Step 7: Spread one portion of the add-ins in the center of the dough strip.



Step 8: Fold the top 1/3rd of the dough over the add-ins you just added.



Step 9: Spread the last portion of add-ins on top of the flap you just folded over.



Step 10: Fold up the bottom flap of the dough over the top of the add-ins you just added



You should now have 8 layers of add-ins evenly distributed between 9 layers of dough! Let the dough continue to bulk ferment. In dividing, pre-shaping and final shaping, you will disrupt some of the distribution of the add-ins but they generally maintain the evenness of distribution through the shaping processes.

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