

CHARCOAL PAINTED SPELT SOURDOUGH

(from the Bewitching Kitchen)

480g bread flour
20g spelt flour
10g salt
370g water
80g sourdough starter at 100% hydration
1 tablespoon activated charcoal powder
a little water
all-purpose flour for stencil detail

Make the levain mixture about 6 hours before you plan to mix the dough. It should be very bubbly and active.

When you are ready to make the final dough, place the water in the bowl of a KitchenAid type mixer and dissolve the starter in it, mixing with a spatula briefly, then add the two types of flour, and the salt. Turn the mixer on with the hook attachment and knead the dough for 4 minutes at low-speed all the time. If the dough is too sticky, add 1/4 cup flour, you want the dough to start clearing the sides of the bowl, but still be sticky at the bottom.

Remove from the machine, and transfer to a container lightly coated with oil, cover lightly with plastic wrap and allow it to ferment for 4 hours, folding every 45 minutes or so. After four hours bulk fermentation, shape the dough as a ball, and place, seam side up, in a lightly floured banetton. Leave at room temperature one hour, and then place in the fridge overnight, from 8 to 12 hours.

Next morning, heat the oven to 450F. Invert the dough over parchment paper, make a paste with the charcoal powder and water, and paint over the surface. Immediately place a stencil on top, and shower white flour over it, rubbing it gently to get the design to stick well. Next, use a brand new razor blade to score around the design, to coach the bread into opening without ruining the pattern.

Bake at 450F for 45 minutes, preferably covered for the first 30 minutes to retain steam. Cool completely over a rack before slicing.