



Sourdough Discard English Muffin Bread - The Final Cut

I'm not a huge fan of most recipes that call for "sourdough discard", since most of them don't use enough of the stuff to clear it out of my fridge quickly. Instead, I've created a few recipes of my own that use as much discard as possible, including this one, which turns nearly 2 cups of it into a quick, dump-and-stir batter bread that has the appearance and texture of an English muffin, especially once toasted (toasting this bread transforms its texture so radically that it is almost part of the recipe). My starting point was the English muffin bread found in James Beard's *Beard on Bread*.

SERVINGS ONE 800G PAN LOAF

PREP 10M | COOK 35M | TOTAL 1H 30M

OVERALL FORMULA

bread flour 100%

water/milk 80%

unsalted butter 7%

sugar 3%

salt 2%

baking soda 1.5%

yeast 1.5%

levain 111%

prefermented flour 50%

LEVAIN (IF NEEDED)

160g flour

160g water

80g starter

DOUGH

cornmeal or semolina,
for dusting pan and top
of loaves

200g bread flour

12g (1 tablespoon) sugar

8g (1 1/8 teaspoon) fine salt

6g (1 1/4 teaspoons) baking soda

6g (1 1/2 teaspoons) instant or active dry
yeast

400g 100%-hydration

1 *LEVAIN* (if needed): Stir the flour, water, and starter until uniform and proof at 78°F until at least doubled in volume, 4 to 8 hours.

2 *DOUGH*: Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position, set a Dutch oven (*one that fits your loaf pan comfortably, with the lid on, and with room to spare*) on the rack, and heat the oven to 400°F (205°C). Grease a 9x5-inch-ish loaf pan (preferably metal for maximum conductivity) and coat liberally with cornmeal or semolina on all sides.

3 Whisk the flour, sugar, salt, baking soda, and yeast in a bowl until well combined, about 15 seconds (or sift through a sifter). Place the milk, butter, and discard or levain in a second bowl and whisk until smooth. Add the dry mixture to the wet and beat vigorously with a dough whisk or wooden spoon until stiff and bubbly. Tip into the prepared pan and level the dough with a spatula. Cover loosely and let sit for 45 minutes.

4 *BAKE*: Dust the top of the loaf liberally with cornmeal or semolina. Carefully transfer to the Dutch oven, cover with the lid, and bake for 20 minutes.

sourdough discard or all of the levain, from above

160g **milk or plant milk** about 130°F / 54°C if using cold discard; 80°F / 27°C if using room-temperature levain

28g (2 tablespoons) **unsalted butter, melted** or oil

5 Carefully remove the loaf from the Dutch oven and transfer to the bare oven rack. Continue to bake until the bread is golden-brown on top and registers at least 200°F (93°C) at the center, 15 to 20 minutes longer.

6 Transfer the pan to a rack and let cool for 5 minutes. Remove the loaf from the pan and return to the rack. Let cool at least 2 hours before slicing (and toasting—this bread is so moist that it is actually *improved* by toasting, even when freshly-baked).

- If you don't have 400g (about 1 ¾ cups) of discard on hand, make a levain from scratch instead, as described in step 1. (Full disclosure: This recipe is even better when made with fresh levain.)

- If you don't have a Dutch oven large enough to hold the loaf pan comfortably, just bake it in the oven instead at 375°F (190°C) for 35 to 40 minutes. Most people find it works just fine that way.

- Use bread flour if you have it, the extra protein will help offset the weakness of the gluten in the sourdough discard.

- Feel free to substitute up to 25% of the flour in the dough with a whole-grain one. The decrease in volume will be more than offset by the boost in flavor.

- Be sure to adjust the temperature of the milk in step 2 depending upon whether you are working with cold discard or room-temperature levain.