

Prep Time	10 minutes (active)
Rest/Ferment Time	12–18 hours
Second Rise	1–2 hours
Bake Time	45 minutes
Total Time	About 14–20 hours (mostly hands-off)
Difficulty	Easy / Beginner
Method	No-knead, Dutch oven, steam-baked

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Ingredients

- 3 cups (360 g) all-purpose flour — or bread flour for a chewier crumb

- 1½ teaspoons (9 g) fine sea salt
- ½ teaspoon (2 g) active dry yeast or ¼ teaspoon instant yeast
- 1½ cups (360 ml) lukewarm water (about 100–110°F / 38–43°C)

Optional add-ins:

- 1 tablespoon honey or sugar (for a slightly softer crust)
 - 1 tablespoon olive oil (for a tender crumb)
 - 1–2 tablespoons rosemary, sesame, or everything bagel seasoning
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Equipment

- Large mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Plastic wrap or damp kitchen towel

- 4–6 quart (4–6 L) Dutch oven with lid
 - Parchment paper
 - Wire cooling rack
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Instructions

Step 1: Mix the Dough (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and yeast. Pour in the lukewarm water. Stir with a wooden spoon until a shaggy, sticky dough forms and no dry flour remains. The dough will look rough and wet — that's exactly right. Do not knead.

If using optional add-ins like honey, olive oil, or herbs, stir them in now.

Step 2: First Rise / Fermentation (12–18 hours | Intensity: None — hands-off)

Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap or a damp towel. Let it sit at cool room temperature (65–72°F / 18–22°C) for 12–18 hours. Overnight is ideal.

What to look for: The dough should double in size, look bubbly, and smell slightly sour and yeasty. In warmer kitchens, 8–10 hours may be enough; in cooler kitchens, go the full 18.

Step 3: Shape the Dough (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Generously flour a work surface and your hands. Scrape the dough out of the bowl onto the

floured surface. It will be very sticky.

Fold the dough over itself 4–6 times, turning the bowl or dough a quarter turn each time, until it forms a rough ball. Flip it seam-side down. Cup your hands around it and gently drag it toward you to tighten the surface into a smooth round.

Place the dough seam-side down on a sheet of parchment paper. Dust lightly with flour.

Step 4: Second Rise (1-2 hours | Intensity: None — hands-off)

Cover the dough loosely with a clean towel. Let it rest while you preheat the oven (see Step 5). It should puff up noticeably and feel airy — about 1 to 2 hours.

Step 5: Preheat the Dutch Oven (30 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Place the Dutch oven with its lid on the middle rack of your oven. Preheat to 450°F (230°C) for at least 30 minutes. A screaming-hot pot is the secret to that dramatic oven spring and crackly crust.

Safety note: The pot will be extremely hot. Use heavy oven mitts.

Step 6: Bake Covered (30 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Carefully remove the hot Dutch oven and set it on a heatproof surface. Lift the dough by the parchment paper and lower it into the pot. Score the top with a sharp knife or lame (optional but helps controlled expansion). Cover with the lid and bake for 30 minutes.

The lid traps steam, mimicking a professional steam-injected oven.

Step 7: Bake Uncovered (15 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Remove the lid and continue baking for 15 minutes, or until the crust is deep golden brown and the loaf sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom. An instant-read thermometer should

read 200–210°F (93–99°C) in the center.

Step 8: Cool Completely (1-2 hours | Intensity: None)

Lift the bread out using the parchment paper and transfer to a wire rack. Cool for at least 1 hour before slicing. Cutting hot bread smears the crumb and ruins the texture — patience pays off here.

Time & Intensity Summary

Phase	Time	Intensity
Mix dough	5 min	Low
First ferment	12–18 hrs	None
Shape	5 min	Low
Second rise	1–2 hrs	None
Preheat Dutch oven	30 min	Low
Bake covered	30 min	Medium
Bake uncovered	15 min	Medium
Cool	1–2 hrs	None

Total active time: ~15 minutes. Total elapsed time: 14–20 hours.

Nutrition Information (per slice, based on 12 slices)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~120 kcal
Total Fat	0.4 g

	Nutrient	Amount
Saturated Fat		0.1 g
Carbohydrates		25 g
Fiber		0.9 g
Sugars		0.1 g
Protein		3.4 g
Sodium		290 mg