Sour Dough Bread

Assuming you have starter. Ours is called Bruce and sits in the fridge till needed.

1. On the day you are going to start the process ( it takes about 24 hours) get Bruce out of the fridge and wake him up. You need to feed him. Add 30g strong flour and 30g water. Mix well.
2. Leave on the side so it can breathe for 4 hours or so till the bubbles are multiplying nicely. Don’t put the lid on tightly as it needs oxygen.

This ideally is done at 8.30 / 9am but you could start it as late as 2pm.

1. 12.30 or so bring dough together. Get a large mixing bowl. Put 50g Bruce in and then put Bruce into fridge again with lid on tightly. (It keeps there for as long as 3 weeks).
2. Add 4g salt and 350g water and stir a bit till no obvious lumps.
3. Add 500g Strong flour (this may be a mix of white and wholemeal or granary to your taste). Stir slowly. Put a large plate or plastic covering on the bowl. Put on the side for 1 hour or so.
4. Important bit – Clean hands. Dig in with one hand. Pick up an edge bit, pull and stretch and pull it over and tuck it in the other side. Turn the bowl and do it again. Repeat for 20 – 30 pulls and tucks. Bit sticky at this stage. Bit like a ball.
5. Leave for 30 min.
6. Got a flatter top at this stage. Add seeds of choice at this stage – linseeds, sesame seeds, pumpkin, sunflower etc. 1 tbsp each. Do same pulling and tucking again but less – e.g. 5 – 10 turns. It’s more stretchy and less likely to tear now. Comes together as a ball much quicker. Leave 30 min. as before on side.

Work it about 4 times over a period of 2 hours, about every 30 min.

1. Last turn – flattened again. Very elastic now. Stretch, pull and tuck again. 5 – 8 times.
2. Now leave 4,5 or 6 hours on the side to continue proving.
3. Just before bedtime – last lift of edges across and tuck gently trying not to knock too much air out. Cover again and this time put it in the fridge overnight. (Important. I missed this stage one time and it over proved and tasted too sour )
4. In the morning, take off covering, flour top (some recipes talk about rice flour for this. It is not necessary) Take large, metal lidded casserole dish. Line it loosely with baking parchment. Oven on as hot as it goes. Fan oven is best – 210 - 230\*. Leave 10 min to get to temperature.
5. Transfer dough - Peel back edges gently to release it. Turn it upside down by hand into the prepared casserole dish.
6. Score top to allow dough to expand in the bake with sharpest knife you have. (Lame – razor blade on a stick) Wet it so it pulls the dough less. I find scissors works well too.
7. Dust with same flour
8. Lid on and into oven when at temperature. Bake for 50 min.
9. Check it is done by knocking the base and it should sound a bit hollow. It should also have a good colour. Cool on rack. Leave to cool before cutting and eating.

I prefer 2 smaller baguettes, so I cut the dough in half and put each upside down on 2 separate baking trays. I score and flour as above and cook for just 19min at 210\*