

# women BAKE BREAD

By **TOD BRAMBLE** *Bread Lines Co-Editor and Guild Board Member*

Imagine yourself arriving in a new country. You don't speak the language; you have left behind everything you know. Immediately upon arrival, you need to find shelter. Then you need to find work, so you can feed yourself and your family and start to meet some of your daily needs.

This scene, scarcely imaginable for most us, plays itself out daily and has done so ever since people began coming to North America looking for a better life. Immigrants continue to arrive today in great numbers, bringing with them highly refined skills. The baking industry in the United States especially reflects this, with immigrants contributing greatly to the regional "flavor" of baking wherever they settle.

The reality facing many of today's immigrants is that while there is no shortage of work, much of it is unskilled, low-wage, and often dangerous. The situation is especially acute for immigrant women arriving in New York. Many of them find employment in the garment industries, food service, and as domestic staff in hotels.

Hot Bread Kitchen (HBK), a Guild member bakery located under the Metro North Railroad tracks at 114th Street in Harlem, sees the great potential these women bring with them in the form of their baking skills and work ethic. HBK provides English language instruction

and employment, and the women provide years of baking experience with products indigenous to their countries: tortillas, chapati, lavash. The combination makes great social and business sense.

In addition to being an ethnic product bakery, HBK acts as an incubator for small-scale baking businesses looking for a commercial space in which to develop, test and launch their products. This is an enormous head start, as many of these businesses were started in people's homes but haven't attained sufficient scale where they can afford to rent a space. HBK offers a much-needed bridge between a home-based baking business and a full scale commercial bakery.

On May 14, I attended a fundraising event for HBK in New York. Organized by Sarah Black of Fairway Market and supported in part by King Arthur Flour and Fairway Markets, Women Bake Bread gathered together a group of women bakers - many of whom are Guild members -- who have shaped baking in New York.

This was not a charity event in which you donate cash to your favorite non-profit organization and get only a coffee mug in return. The 65 people who registered were taught by Amy Scherber of Amy's Bread, Monica Calderon of Grandaisy, Rhonda Crosson of The French Culinary Institute, Sharon Burns-Leader of Bread

Amy Scherber giving a demonstration on sourdough bread.



Alone, Sarah Black of Fairway Market, Karen Bornarth of Le Pain Quotidien, and Jessamyn W. Rodriguez of the Hot Bread Kitchen.

The event ran all day, starting at 8:30 am with opening words of introduction by Jessamyn W. Rodriguez, founder and Director of HBK. Next came two simultaneous classes: Jessamyn and some of her staff teaching a primer on international breads, and Amy Scherber giving an introductory lesson on sourdough bread. In the second session Sarah Black gave a demonstration on how to use one dough to make three breads: ciabatta, fougasse, and focaccia, and Monica Calderon and her bakers demonstrated the art and technique of Roman-style pizza.

By 1:00 pm everyone was ready for lunch. Instead of taking a break, however, we gathered in the large production room where a panel discussion of all the women instructors was moderated by Charlotte Druckman.

After lunch, Karen Bornarth held a class featuring the Classic French Baguette. This was a true hands-on session with all the participants taking turns shaping, using various techniques. And for the final sessions of the day, Rhonda Crosson gave a demonstration on hand-shaping techniques for bagels and pretzels, and Sharon Burns-Leader gave a lesson on flatbreads and crackers.

The instructors at the Hot Bread Kitchen fund raising event (from left to right): Sarah Black, Karen Bornarth, Rhonda Crosson, Monica Calderon, Sharon Burns-Leader, and Jessamyn W. Rodriguez



PHOTOS: MOLLY CROSSIN

## COUNTRY SOURDOUGH BOULE

Contributed by **AMY SCHERBER**

### PREFERMENT

: Mix preferment 1 day before you plan to use it. Let rise for 4 hours at room temp, then chill until ready to use.

### FINAL DOUGH

: Place water, starter and yeast in the bowl of a spiral mixer. Mix on 1<sup>st</sup> speed to break up the starter, 1 minute.

: Add flours and salt and mix for 4 more minutes on 1<sup>st</sup> speed, or until dough has come together and flour is fully hydrated. Dough should feel wet and sticky. If too dry, add cool water and mix to incorporate.

: Let rest 15 to 20 minutes.

: Mix again on 1<sup>st</sup> speed for 1 minute, then 2<sup>nd</sup> speed for 3-5 minutes until dough is stretchy and elastic. Desired temp, 78°F.

: Place in oiled tub to rise at cool room temp.

: After 1 hour, fold and turn.

: After 45-60 minutes divide dough into pieces at 525 gr. or 750 gr. and pre-shape into balls.

### SHAPE & BAKE

: After 15 minutes shape into loaves (boules, batards, etc.)

: Let rise in cloth-lined basket or on boards lined with couch for 1-2 hours.

: Score and bake with steam in preheated 475°F deck oven until dark brown and crusty.

: Cool, then enjoy. ☀



Country Sourdough Boule baked by Amy Scherber during her demonstration at the Hot Bread Kitchen.

The generosity of the women leading the demonstrations was enormous, and their willingness to pass on their baking knowledge led to the event being a success for those in attendance. Karen Bornarth summed it up perfectly when she said, "For me it was a terrific day—we raised money for a worthy organization, and I got to hang out in the company of people who love to bake bread, which is always fun."

The event raised over \$7,000 dollars for Hot Bread Kitchen.

During the late afternoon, while the last demonstrations were still underway, the women bakers of HBK began to arrive for the start of their production shifts. The energy of the place started to shift from a wonderful day of baking instruction to one of production, all fueled by a passion for the craft of baking and a commitment to making lives better. ☀

For more information on HBK, visit <http://hotbreadkitchen.org>.

### PROCESS - Country Sourdough Boule

Mixing	Type of mixer	Spiral
First fermentation	Length of time	4 hours at room temp, place in cooler until needed
	Dough temp	78°F

Mixing	Type of mixer	Spiral
	1st speed	5 mins
	Autolyse	20 mins
	1st speed	1 min
	2nd speed	3 - 5 mins
	Dough temp	78°F

First fermentation	Length of time	2 hours
	Number of folds	1
	Timing for folds	After first hour

Shaping	Divide	.525 or .750 kg
	Preshape	Round
	Resting time	15 mins
	Shape	Varied
	Proofing device	Couche, basket, board

Proof & Bake	Final proof time	1 - 2 hrs @ 75°F
	Oven type	Deck
	Steam	20 secs
	Total bake	Until dark brown
	Temperature	475°F
	Damper open	N/A

COUNTRY SOURDOUGH BOULE					
			Total Flour Prefermented		
Total Dough Weight (TDW)			10.000 kg	10.80%	
Ingredients	TOTAL FORMULA %	kilograms	LEVAIN %	kilograms	FINAL DOUGH Ingredients kilograms
Total Flour	100.00%	5.450 kg	100.00%	1.457 kg	Total Flour 4.860 kg
Unbleached Bread Flour	97.10%	4.670 kg	100.00%	0.590 kg	Unbleached Bread Flour 4.080 kg
Pumpernickel Flour	2.90%	0.780 kg			Pumpernickel Flour 0.780 kg
Fresh Yeast	0.60%	0.035 kg			Fresh Yeast 0.035 kg
Kosher Salt	2.00%	0.108 kg			Kosher Salt 0.108 kg
Sourdough Starter*	4.20%	0.231 kg	39.20%	0.231 kg	
Water (75°-78°F)	76.60%	4.176 kg	39.20%	0.231 kg	Water (75°-78°F) 3.945 kg
					Levain 1.052 kg
<b>Totals</b>	<b>183.40%</b>	<b>10.000 kg</b>	<b>178.40%</b>	<b>1.052 kg</b>	<b>10.000 kg</b>

\*Sourdough Starter is Active White or Rye