

## Couronnes, Epi and Fougasse

A lean bread dough can be shaped in French baking into many delicious forms. For lovers of a great crust these breads maximize the surface to interior volume, and shaping can allow your sculpting talents to shine. Start with the basic dough, then branch out into the flavor variations described below. To spice up your bread making, you can mix up a two loaf batch, make one variation one day, then another a few days later with the rest of the refrigerated dough.

### Sculpted Dough

Two Loaves	Ingredient	One Loaf
6 cups, 854 g	Bread flour, 93%	3 cups, 426 g
½ cup, 64 g	Whole wheat flour, 7%	¼ cup, 32 g
1 ½ Tbsp, 14 g	Yeast, 1.5%	¾ Tbsp, 7 g
1 ½ Tbsp, 22 g	Salt, 2.3%	¾ Tbsp, 11%
2 ¾ cups, 651 g	Water, heated to 105-115 degrees, 71%	1 ¼ cups plus 2 Tbsp, 326 g

In a large bowl stir the bread flour, whole wheat flour, yeast and salt together. Add the warm water and stir until smooth then stir vigorously another 15-30 seconds. Cover and allow to stand at room temperature for 2 hours then refrigerate until ready to use, OR refrigerate immediately and use at least 12 hours later.

**Dough Variations:** Add one of these ingredient combinations to the refrigerated dough just prior shaping.

Two Loaves	Variation	One Loaf
¼ cup unsalted sunflower seeds ¼ cup flax seeds	Seeded dough	2 Tbsp unsalted sunflower seeds ¼ cup flax seeds
¼ cup sesame seeds	Sesame dough	2 Tbsp sesame seeds
2 Tbsp curry powder	Curry-Currant dough	1 Tbsp curry powder
½ cup dried currants or raisins		¼ cup dried currants or raisins
½ cup chopped, toasted walnuts	Walnut-onion	¼ cup chopped walnuts
¼ cup chopped green onion or scallions		2 Tbsp chopped green onion or scallions
¼ cup dry rosemary	Rosemary-Asiago	2 Tbsp dry rosemary
4 oz grated Asiago cheese		2 oz grated Asiago cheese

### Shaping a Couronne

If adding variation ingredients, work a single batch of dough out into a large rectangle about 9 by 12 inches on a floured surface and sprinkle half the variation ingredients over the rectangle. Push the ingredients down into the dough then fold it into thirds as in folding a letter for a business envelope. Again work the dough out into a 9 by 12 inch rectangle and sprinkle the remaining half of the variation ingredients onto the dough. Press the ingredients down into the dough then fold into thirds again.

Fold once more into a square then form into a ball by pulling the smooth surface dough down to the bottom of the ball and rotating repeatedly. Next, use your thumb to punch a hole in the middle of the dough and push the dough outward from the center to make a larger hole in the middle of the crown. Continue to make the hole bigger while rotating the dough a bit until you have a crown with a 20% bigger diameter hole than desired for the final loaf.

Lay the loaf on a peel or baking sheet covered with parchment then cover with plastic wrap. Allow the dough to rest for 30-45 minutes while the oven is warming. Preheat the oven, baking stone, and steam pan to 450 F.

Score the couronne, then slide onto the baking stone, turn the oven down to 400 degrees and pour a cup of water into the steam pan. Bake for 45 minutes then remove to a wire rack to cool.

A couronne can be scored with diagonal or transverse slashes, or scored circumferentially around the outer part of the crown.

### **Shaping Pain de Epi**

If adding variation ingredients, work a single batch of dough out into a large rectangle about 9 by 12 inches on a floured surface and sprinkle half the variation ingredients over the rectangle. Push the ingredients down into the dough then fold it into thirds as in folding a letter for a business envelope. Again work the dough out into a 9 by 12 inch rectangle and sprinkle the remaining half of the variation ingredients onto the dough. Press the ingredients down into the dough then fold into thirds again.

Seal the edges of the dough then roll out into a long cylinder shape, about 3 by 14 inches in size. Place the cylinder on a peel or baking sheet covered with parchment. Using a scissors, start 2 ½ inches from one end and make a 45 degree cut almost down to the bottom, leaving a half inch or so of connected dough. Bend the cut piece of dough 45 degrees to the right. Go down the cylinder 2 ½ more inches and repeat the process, bending the cut piece to the opposite side. Repeat until the whole cylinder has been cut.

Cover the loaf loosely with plastic wrap and allow to rest at room temperature for 30-45 minutes while the oven is warming. Preheat the oven, baking stone and steam pan to 450 degrees.

Slide the epi onto the baking stone, turn the oven down to 400 degrees and pour a cup of water into the steam pan. Bake for 35 minutes then remove to a wire rack to cool.

One can make a couronne epi also. Curl the cylinder into a “C” shape then cut 3 epi shapes from each end, leaving intact cylinder in the middle.

### **Shaping Fougasse**

If adding variation ingredients, work a single batch of dough out into a large rectangle about 9 by 12 inches and sprinkle half the variation ingredients over the rectangle. Push the ingredients down into the dough then fold it into thirds as in folding a letter for a business envelope. Again work the dough out into a 9 by 12 inch rectangle and sprinkle the remaining half of the variation ingredients onto the dough. Press the ingredients down into the dough then fold into thirds again.

Preheat the oven, baking stone and steam pan to 450 degrees. On a floured surface, form the dough out into a squat oval, rectangle, or pyramid then continue to flatten until a flat shape of about 9 by 12 inches results. Transfer the dough to a peel or baking sheet covered with parchment. Use the tip of a table knife to slit holes making the desired pattern in the dough. Spread the dough a bit to make the slits larger then slide onto the baking stone in the oven. Turn the oven down to 400 degrees and pour a cup of water into the steam pan. Bake for 35 minute then remove to a wire rack to cool.

The most common fougasse patterns are a ladder or tree shape.