VANILLAGOODS BAKING ACADEMY · BREAD & ENRICHED DOUGH

Course workbook

Bread Baking 101

Kneading, fermentation, shaping



Beginner · 5 video lessons · 48 minutes of video · Notes, quizzes and a practice log

By the end you'll be able to

- Knead and check gluten development
- Read fermentation
- Shape and bake enriched loaves

Inside

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Lesson videos by Bake with Jack, Baking Great Bread at Home, Joshua Weissman and Preppy Kitchen, watched on YouTube from the course page.

This workbook belongs to _____

Free course: **vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-course/bread-baking-101**

November 2026

START HERE

How to use this workbook

This workbook goes with the free video course **Bread Baking 101** on vanillagoods.com. Watch each lesson there, then use these pages to keep what you learned and to track what you have practised.

1

Watch

Open the lesson page and watch the creator's video. Jot quick notes on the lined space as you go.

2

Read and tick

Read the VanillaGoods notes, then tick each key point once you can explain it in your own words.

3

Check and practise

Answer the three questions, compare with the answer key on page 13, then log your bake.

Your lesson plan

	LESSON	VIDEO	WATCHED	QUIZ	PRACTISED
1	**Kneading and the windowpane test** Video by Bake with Jack	9 min	☐	☐	☐
2	**Understanding fermentation** Video by Baking Great Bread at Home	6 min	☐	☐	☐
3	**Shaping a sandwich loaf** Video by Joshua Weissman	10 min	☐	☐	☐
4	**Brioche** Video by Preppy Kitchen	13 min	☐	☐	☐
5	**Braiding challah** Video by Joshua Weissman	10 min	☐	☐	☐

Tools you'll see

Bench scraper · Stand mixer · Kitchen scale · Instant-read thermometer · Dutch oven · 9×5 loaf pan · Cooling rack · Pastry brush · Half-sheet pan

Any brand works. The lessons show what each tool is for.

Keep track online too

On each lesson page, "Mark complete" saves your progress in your browser, with no account. Finish every lesson and the course page lets you print a free certificate of completion.

Kneading and the windowpane test

Video by **Bake with Jack**: *"87: FIVE signs your Bread Dough is Fully Kneaded, Before and After - Bake with Jack"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/bread-baking-101-1-kneading-and-the-windowpane-test

Recognize when bread dough is fully kneaded, from texture and stickiness to the windowpane test.

Key points

- [ ] Well-kneaded dough is smooth, elastic and less sticky
- [ ] The windowpane test shows strong gluten
- [ ] Enriched doughs need longer kneading

Signs it's ready

- The surface is smooth and slightly shiny
- It's less sticky and pulls cleanly from the bowl or bench
- It springs back slowly when poked
- It holds a round shape instead of slumping
- A small piece stretches thin enough to see light through without tearing

How long

By hand, most doughs need 8–12 minutes; in a stand mixer, 5–8 minutes on low to medium. Doughs rich in butter, eggs or sugar take longer.

Watch for

A bench scraper makes sticky dough manageable. Resist adding lots of extra flour; that makes bread dry. A short rest of 10–20 minutes also lets gluten develop with less work.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Bench scraper · Stand mixer · Kitchen scale · Instant-read thermometer

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 What does the windowpane test show?

- (A) That the dough has enough salt
- (B) That the yeast is active
- (C) That the gluten is strong enough to stretch thin without tearing

2 How long does kneading by hand usually take?

- (A) About 8 to 12 minutes
- (B) About 2 minutes
- (C) About 30 minutes

3 The dough is sticky. The best move is to...

- (A) Add lots of extra flour
- (B) Use a bench scraper or give it a short rest instead of flooding it with flour
- (C) Add more water

Practice log

Practice is where the lesson sticks. Note what you made and what you would do differently.

WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Understanding fermentation

Video by **Baking Great Bread at Home**: *"Sourdough Bulk Fermentation vs. Cold Retard — What Each Phase Actually Does"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/bread-baking-101-2-understanding-fermentation

What bulk fermentation and a cold overnight proof each do to bread dough, and how to judge them by the dough, not the clock.

Key points

- [ ] Bulk fermentation builds gas, strength and flavor
- [ ] Temperature controls how fast dough ferments
- [ ] A cold retard slows things down and deepens flavor

Bulk fermentation

After mixing, yeast (or sourdough culture) produces gas and acids that raise the dough, strengthen it and create flavor. Warm dough ferments faster; cool dough slower. That's why recipes give a range, and why reading the dough matters more than the timer.

Read the dough

- Yeasted doughs roughly double; sourdough often grows 50–75%
- The surface is domed and you can see bubbles on the sides
- The dough jiggles when you shake the bowl
- Poked gently, it springs back slowly

Cold retard

Shaped dough rested in the fridge overnight ferments slowly, develops deeper flavor and is firmer and easier to score. This video uses sourdough, but the same principles apply to yeasted breads.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Instant-read thermometer · Dutch oven · Bench scraper · Kitchen scale

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 What does bulk fermentation do for the dough?

- (A) Only makes it bigger
- (B) Dries it out
- (C) Builds gas, strength and flavor

2 Why do recipes give a time range instead of one time?

- (A) Because temperature changes how fast dough ferments
- (B) Because ovens differ
- (C) Because flour brands vary in color

3 What does an overnight cold retard in the fridge do?

- (A) Stops fermentation completely
- (B) Slows fermentation, deepens flavor and makes the dough firmer to score
- (C) Doubles the dough in an hour

Practice log

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WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
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WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Shaping a sandwich loaf

Video by **Joshua Weissman**: *"How To Make Supermarket Bread (Sandwich Loaf Bread)"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/bread-baking-101-3-shaping-a-sandwich-loaf

Make and shape a soft sandwich loaf that rises evenly in the pan and slices neatly.

Key points

- [ ] Shape a tight log so the loaf rises tall
- [ ] Proof until the dough crowns about an inch above the pan
- [ ] Bake to about 190°F inside and cool before slicing

Shaping

- Press the risen dough into a rectangle about as wide as your pan is long
- Roll it up tightly, pressing each turn to remove air pockets
- Pinch the seam closed and place seam-side down in a greased 9×5 pan

Proofing and baking

Proof until the top rises about an inch over the rim and springs back slowly when poked. Bake at about 350–375°F until deep golden and about 190°F in the center.

Watch for

Turn the loaf out right away and cool it completely on a rack, about an hour. Slicing hot bread squashes the crumb and makes it gummy.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: 9×5 loaf pan · Instant-read thermometer · Cooling rack · Bench scraper

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 Why roll the dough into a tight log for a sandwich loaf?

- (A) So it bakes faster
- (B) So the crust stays soft
- (C) So the loaf rises tall and even

2 The loaf is ready to bake when the dough...

- (A) Crowns about an inch above the rim and springs back slowly
- (B) Reaches the rim of the pan
- (C) Has risen two inches above the rim

3 Why wait about an hour before slicing the baked loaf?

- (A) The crust needs to soften
- (B) The crumb is still setting and slicing hot squashes it
- (C) The flavor develops as it cools

Practice log

Practice is where the lesson sticks. Note what you made and what you would do differently.

WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
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WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Brioche

Video by **Preppy Kitchen**: *"Brioche Bread Recipe and BIG NEWS!!!"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/bread-baking-101-4-brioche

Make rich, buttery brioche by building gluten first and then working in soft butter a little at a time.

Key points

- [ ] Develop the gluten before adding the butter
- [ ] Add soft butter gradually
- [ ] Chill the dough to make shaping easy

Mixing

- Mix flour, eggs, sugar, salt, yeast and milk until smooth and elastic
- Add very soft butter a few pieces at a time, letting each disappear before adding more
- Keep mixing until the dough pulls from the sides and passes a windowpane test
- A stand mixer is the easiest way to handle this sticky dough

Chill, shape, bake

Let the dough rise, then refrigerate it for a few hours or overnight; cold brioche dough is much easier to shape. Proof until puffy, brush with egg wash and bake until deep brown and about 190°F inside.

VanillaGoods tip

Brioche makes outstanding French toast. Soak slices in a custard of eggs, milk, sugar and vanilla bean seeds.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Stand mixer · 9×5 loaf pan · Pastry brush · Instant-read thermometer

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 When does the butter go into brioche dough?

- (A) After the gluten is developed, a few pieces at a time
- (B) At the very start, with the flour
- (C) After the first rise

2 Why chill brioche dough before shaping?

- (A) It makes the butter melt out
- (B) Cold dough is much easier to shape
- (C) It speeds up proofing

3 Brioche is baked through at about...

- (A) 160°F inside
- (B) 210°F inside
- (C) 190°F inside

Practice log

Practice is where the lesson sticks. Note what you made and what you would do differently.

WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
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WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

Braiding challah

Video by **Joshua Weissman**: *"How to Make The Best Braided Bread: Challah"*

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-lesson/bread-baking-101-5-braiding-challah

Make soft, glossy challah and braid it with three, four or six strands.

Key points

- [ ] Weigh the strands so the braid is even
- [ ] Taper the ends and braid loosely
- [ ] Double egg wash for a deep shine

Preparing strands

- Divide the dough by weight for evenly sized strands
- Roll each into a rope thicker in the middle and tapered at the ends
- Let the ropes rest a few minutes if they shrink back

Braiding

For three strands, start from the middle and braid to each end so the loaf is even. Four- and six-strand braids follow a repeating over-and-under pattern; keep the braid relaxed so it has room to rise.

Finishing

Brush with egg wash, proof until puffy, brush again and add sesame or poppy seeds. Bake at about 350°F until deep golden and about 190°F inside.

TOOLS IN THIS LESSON: Kitchen scale · Pastry brush · Half-sheet pan · Bench scraper

NOTES WHILE YOU WATCH

✓ Check yourself

Three quick questions from this lesson. Mark your answers, then compare with the answer key on page 13.

1 How do you get strands of the same size?

- (A) Divide it by eye
- (B) Cut it with a ruler
- (C) Divide the dough by weight

2 For a three-strand braid, where do you start?

- (A) From the middle, braiding out to each end
- (B) At one end
- (C) In the oven

3 What gives challah its deep shine?

- (A) Brushing with butter
- (B) Two coats of egg wash, before and after proofing
- (C) A sprinkle of sugar

✎ Practice log

Practice is where the lesson sticks. Note what you made and what you would do differently.

WHAT I MADE	DATE AND HOW IT WENT
	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

WHAT WENT WELL

WHAT I'D CHANGE NEXT TIME

ANSWER KEY

Check your answers

One correct answer per question. If you missed one, the note explains why, and the lesson page has the full notes and the video.

1. Kneading and the windowpane test

1 **C** A small piece of well-kneaded dough stretches thin enough to see light through without tearing, which means the gluten is developed.

2 **A** Most doughs need 8 to 12 minutes by hand or 5 to 8 in a stand mixer; doughs rich in butter, eggs or sugar take longer.

3 **B** Extra flour makes bread dry; a bench scraper, or a 10 to 20 minute rest, makes sticky dough manageable while the gluten develops.

2. Understanding fermentation

1 **C** During bulk fermentation the yeast produces gas and acids that raise the dough, strengthen it and create flavor.

2 **A** Warm dough ferments faster and cool dough slower, so you read the dough (domed, bubbly, jiggly, slow spring-back) rather than the clock.

3 **B** A cold retard ferments the shaped dough slowly, developing deeper flavor and a firmer surface that is easier to score.

3. Shaping a sandwich loaf

1 **C** A tight log, pressed on each turn to remove air pockets, gives a loaf that rises tall and slices without holes.

2 **A** Proof until the top rises about an inch over the rim and springs back slowly when poked.

3 **B** The inside is still setting as it cools; slicing hot bread squashes the crumb and makes it gummy.

4. Brioche

1 **A** Mix the dough until smooth and elastic first, then add very soft butter gradually, letting each piece disappear before the next.

2 **B** Rich, buttery dough is sticky when warm; a few hours or overnight in the fridge makes it easy to shape.

3 **C** Bake until deep brown and about 190°F inside, the target for enriched loaves.

5. Braiding challah

1 **C** Weighing the dough into equal pieces gives an even braid.

2 **A** Starting in the middle and braiding to each end keeps the loaf even from end to end.

3 **B** Brush with egg wash, proof until puffy, then brush again before the seeds go on.

WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED

Three things to do next

1

Mark each lesson complete

The "Mark complete" button on every lesson page saves your progress in your browser. No account, nothing to sign up for.

2

Print your certificate

Once all 5 lessons are marked complete, the course page prints a free certificate of completion with your name on it. It records what you finished; it is not an accredited qualification.

3

Bake it

Practice with VanillaGoods recipes that use what this course teaches.

vanillagoods.com/pages/recipes?q=bread

NEXT ON THE LEARNING PATH

Custards & French Desserts

Beginner · Crème brûlée, pastry cream, mousse

vanillagoods.com/pages/baking-course/creme-brulee-and-custards

Free guide for this course: “Baker's percentage worksheet”, Scale any bread recipe with baker's percentages. Get it from the course page.

Baking with real vanilla? VanillaGoods keeps Madagascar, Uganda and Tahiti vanilla in stock, along with coffee and tea, at vanillagoods.com.

✧ Key points from every lesson

1. Kneading and the windowpane test

- Well-kneaded dough is smooth, elastic and less sticky
- The windowpane test shows strong gluten
- Enriched doughs need longer kneading

2. Understanding fermentation

- Bulk fermentation builds gas, strength and flavor
- Temperature controls how fast dough ferments
- A cold retard slows things down and deepens flavor

3. Shaping a sandwich loaf

- Shape a tight log so the loaf rises tall
- Proof until the dough crowns about an inch above the pan
- Bake to about 190°F inside and cool before slicing

4. Brioche

- Develop the gluten before adding the butter
- Add soft butter gradually
- Chill the dough to make shaping easy

5. Braiding challah

- Weigh the strands so the braid is even
- Taper the ends and braid loosely
- Double egg wash for a deep shine

The lesson videos are by independent creators (Bake with Jack, Baking Great Bread at Home, Joshua Weissman and Preppy Kitchen) and play in YouTube's own player on the lesson pages; this workbook links to them and copies nothing. Notes, key points, questions and this workbook are written by VanillaGoods for home bakers.

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