

SOURDOUGH IN EUROPE

Until the development of baker's yeast in the middle of the 19th Century, sourdough was the main way to make leavened bread by fermentation.

Sourdough production is a traditional bread making practice that has led to the development of specific bakery ingredients. Sourdough is obtained by the fermentation of microorganisms (bacteria and yeast) which are raw materials found in cereals and which are naturally present in the environment or added to the fermentation as sourdough culture. The acidifying fermentation is mainly due to lactic acid bacteria whilst the rising capacity of the dough comes from yeast.

The combination of microorganisms, raw materials and process conditions gives each sourdough product a unique characteristic.

Consequently some European regions have been granted with a "Protected geographic indication" status in order to preserve the integrity of bread products made with specific local sourdoughs; e.g. sourdough di Matera or sourdough Casareccio di Genzano .

The denomination "sourdough" or its local customary denomination describes the product obtained from cereal raw materials fermentation with mainly lactic acid bacteria and yeast to which no additional substance, such as acids, bases and their salts, have been added to artificially adapt the acidity of the fermented product.

Active sourdough in bread and bakery process is used as a raising agent providing specific properties and typical characteristics.

Sourdough may also be inactivated to provide typical organoleptic characteristics to the bakery products without leavening capacity.

The few legal provisions and code of practices across some Member States in the European Union which define sourdough and sourdough bread must be respected when such products are sold into these markets.

A proper labelling must be applied for consumer information allowing to differentiate bread fermented by sourdough from other uses than leavening.

Adopted by the Board on 18 July 2019