

My cup runneth over, or more precisely, it was the two-quart glass jar that is my sourdough starter container that had runneth over. I had cleaned the refrigerator earlier today and, in the process, realized that I needed to “feed” my sourdough starter, giving it a dose of warm water and flour. I thought it had plenty of room to work, and I went to the garden.

When I came back into the cabin, it was quite apparent that I had arrived just in time. Rivulets of sourdough starter ran down the outside of the glass jar, but none had reached the counter top. I hastily stirred the starter and removed a cupful to use in a quickly made sourdough coffee cake recipe.

The warm cinnamommy smell of the cake met us as we returned from checking on the hay that needed to lie a few more hours before baling. There was just time for a cup of coffee and a piece of warm cake.

I like to bake. While cookie making isn't my favorite job in the kitchen, we do enjoy a variety of cookies from our own oven. I like to bake pies, but it is often more sensible to make small turnover-type pies to fit our two-person household. And I don't mind making a cake now and then, but I wouldn't want to bake cakes day in and day out. I don't think I'd like working in a bakery.

What I really like to bake is bread. I buy unbleached chemical-free flour from our local Amish store. The fifty-pound sack will comfortably fill three five-gallon pails. The same store orders organic rye berries for me. For our “daily bread,” I grind the rye and mix it about half and half with the unbleached wheat flour. Sometimes, the rye predominates a little more. We love

the flavor of rye.

Our regular bread is a flatbread, but not a hard one. I roll out the risen dough into large round, flat disks about half an inch thick. These are allowed to rise on muslin cloths placed on thin rectangles of plywood that fit—almost as shelves—in the little cupboard we call the “kakaskåp.”

When the dough has risen properly, I prick each disk—one at a time as they are ready to bake—with a fork. I flip it upside down onto the maple baking peel that Runo made, and prick the other side. Then I slide the round onto the bottom shelf of the oven. A pizza stone covers the grate of the shelf, so the unbaked bread has somewhere to rest.

The oven is set at 515 degrees Fahrenheit. This bread does not take long to bake! After four minutes, I slide the bread onto another hand made wooden paddle and lift it to the upper shelf of the oven. With the bottom now firm and brown, it is easy to move the bread to the higher position. Then, I put another disk on the pizza stone. In this way, it doesn't take long for our bread to bake.

These breads are very similar to the bread Runo grew up eating. We call them “kakor,” the singular of the word being “kaka.” This is the bread that we eat every day.

Some people don't eat a lot of bread, because they are (or think they are) sensitive to the gluten in wheat. A few must truly avoid gluten products, but many people seem to have developed a fear of grains that are perfectly good food for most of us and are truly delicious.

I bake other kinds of bread, too. Sometimes, I make loaves

of the same dough as the “kakor,” but I also make whole wheat bread, raisin bread, cinnamon rolls, other sweet rolls, scones, biscuits, French-type breads, breadsticks, and crackers. It seems to me that if we have good bread and good butter, we don’t need much else to satisfy our hunger. A slice of tasty cheese or a spoonful of homemade strawberry-rhubarb jam is all we need.