Upinngil Sourdough Bread

Makes 2 large or 3 small loaves
Using a scale is always best. This recipe has approximate cup equivalents in case you don't have access to a scale, but results will vary much more.

1. The Evening Starter

To 1 Tbs. active starter add:
100g (½ c.) water
Stir, then add:
50g (scant ½ c.) whole grain rye flour
50g (scant ½ c.) white bread flour
Stir well, it should have the consistency of a thick paste. Leave in warm place until bubbly 6-12 hr, then use to start dough. To maintain active starter at room temperature, discard down to 1 tbs. daily and stir in equal weight flour and water. This feeds the yeasts and keeps them actively growing. Starter may be stored dormant in fridge up to 1 week or freezer up to 1 month. Feed dormant starter at least two days at room temperature until it becomes active (bubbling) again before making dough. Discard and feed the evening before you plan to make the dough.

2. The Morning Dough

In large bowl weigh out:
700g (3c.) luke-warm water
Add:
200g (1-1/4c.) active starter
Active starter will float. If your starter sinks, do not proceed, return to first step. If it floats, mix starter into water, then add:
300g (2 ½ c.) whole grain rye flour
700g (4 ½ c.) white bread flour
Mix well, until no dry clumps remain. This is the hard part, a sturdy wooden spoon or hands work best.

Let sit 30 min, then sprinkle over the top:
27g (1 Tb. +1 ½ tsp.) of salt
Pour over the salt:
50g (¼ c.) of warm water
With your hands "dimple down" the salt deep into the dough, then reach down the sides of the bowl and pull the dough up and over itself about four times, working your way around the bowl so that the dough becomes a cohesive mass. This technique is called "stretch and fold". Repeat every 30 min. dip your hand in water and "stretch and fold" the dough a couple times. Once you've done this about 4 times, stop and let it rise 2-4 hours. It should begin to puff up.

3. The Afternoon Shaping

Transfer to counter, sprinkle with flour and divide into 2 or 3 pieces. Shape into boules, grease loaf pans. Shape boules into loaves and put in pans. (Alternatively, place loaves in cloth-lined basket if using dutch oven bake technique, see next step.) Let rise 1-2 hours at room temp until puffed and level with sides of pan. Cover with cloth and refrigerate overnight (or up to 2 days).

4. The Morning Bake

To set up the oven to bake, place a pan full of water in the bottom and a pan full of water in the top (we use 2 half sheet pans with 6 cups of water in each). Preheat the oven to 500F. Take the loaves out of the fridge, sprinkle their surface with rice flour and score them with a razor blade (if desired - this step is purely cosmetic). Load them into the oven, bake for 20 min. Remove water pans, lower the oven temp to 400F, bake for another 20 min.

Alternatively, you can bake a single loaf in a dutch oven instead of using water pans. Preheat oven with dutch oven inside to 450F. Remove loaf from fridge and plop cold dough straight into hot dutch oven. Score if desired. Cover and bake 20 min, remove cover and lower temperature to 350F and bake another 20 min. Enjoy!