# Is your sourdough really sourdough? Experts warn of supermarket ‘sour faux’



In recent years, sourdough bread has surged in popularity, attracting a devoted following due to its distinct flavour and perceived health benefits. However, Dr Federica Amati has raised concerns about the quality of sourdough available in supermarkets, labelling many loaves as 'sour faux'. Speaking to the Bristol Post, Dr Amati noted that these products often contain only a minimal amount of genuine sourdough.

Sourdough distinguishes itself from standard bread by relying on a starter culture—a blend of fermented flour and water that contains wild yeast and beneficial bacteria—rather than commercial yeast for leavening. As a result of its slower fermentation process, sourdough is noted for having a lower glycaemic index compared to its commercially produced counterparts, aiding in slower blood sugar rises and potentially promoting a feeling of fullness for a longer duration.

Despite these advantages, Dr Amati cautions that the term 'sourdough' is not regulated, allowing various breads to carry the label without adhering to traditional production methods. She commented, "The problem with sourdough in the supermarkets is that they are often 'sour faux'. There's a little bit of sourdough in them but they haven't been made in the proper way." Consumers may often find loaves laden with numerous additives, sugars, and emulsifiers. For example, Dr Amati analysed one standard supermarket loaf containing an extensive list of ingredients, including wheat flour, various seeds, sugar, and multiple additives—pointing to the absence of traditional sourdough characteristics.

The economic incentive for supermarkets to produce rapid versions of sourdough lies in its time-consuming nature; authentic sourdough bread can require up to four days of preparation from start to finish. Instead of undergoing this lengthy process, some retailers incorporate small amounts of authentic sourdough into their bread mixtures, allowing them to label these products as sourdough while making significant compromises on authenticity and health benefits.

In light of these revelations, the Real Bread Campaign has highlighted these misleading sourdough products. Dr Amati urges consumers to opt for breads with simpler, healthier ingredient lists. When comparing a hand-finished, seeded sourdough that she reviewed—composed merely of wheat, water, fermented flour, salt, and pumpkin seeds—she noted the absence of added sugars and emulsifiers as a significant advantage.

In summary, as consumers increasingly gravitate towards sourdough bread, it is important to remain vigilant regarding product labels and ingredients to ensure that the bread they choose aligns with their health expectations and dietary preferences.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.prevention.com/food-nutrition/healthy-eating/a64311441/benefits-of-sourdough-bread/> - This article supports the health benefits of sourdough bread, including improved gut health and a lower glycemic index, by explaining the fermentation process and its effects on nutrient availability.
* <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/health/nutrition/health-benefits-sourdough> - It corroborates the nutritional profile of sourdough, highlighting its potential to aid blood sugar management, reduce the risk of heart disease, and offer better digestion due to its fermentation process.
* <https://www.eatingwell.com/article/7904008/health-benefits-of-sourdough-bread-according-to-a-dietitian/> - This source emphasizes the nutritional benefits of sourdough, discussing its positive impact on gut health, digestion, and its role in promoting healthy aging, with a focus on whole grains.
* <https://www.realbread.org/campaigns/the-real-bread-campaign> - The Real Bread Campaign is mentioned in the context of highlighting misleading sourdough products and advocating for authentic sourdough made with simpler ingredients.
* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8111827/> - This scientific article supports the idea that fermented foods like sourdough can have beneficial effects on gut health and metabolic processes through their prebiotic properties.