**Pinzgau Country Loaf/*Pinzgauer Bauernbrot***(Austria)

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| ***Rye %:*** | *60%* |
| ***Stages:*** | *Monheimer Salt Sponge, Final dough* |
| ***Leaven:*** | *Rye sour culture, Instant yeast* |
| ***Start to Finish*** | *16-18 hours* |
| ***Hands-on Time:*** | *30-4o minutes* |
| ***Yield:*** | *Two 34 oz. (965 g.) loaves* |

Pinzgau is in western Austria, bordered by Bavaria to the north, Switzerland to the west and alpine Italy to the south. Like most of the Alpine regions, its breads are typically mixed wheat and rye, and the rye flours are lighter than those in the north. Here, too, the use of bread spice (*brotgewürz*) – a 10-6-6-2 blend of caraway, anise, fennel and coriander, toasted and ground fine – is common, adding subtle notes of astringent, sweet and citrus to the breads.

Again, like so many European rye breads, Pinzgauer has many variations. I adapted this one from Björn Hollensteiner, a physician and hobby baker who's also one of Germany's best-known bread bloggers (brotdoc.com). He, in turn adapted it from Lutz Geissler (www.plötzblog.de) another of Germany's premier bread blogs.

This version is interesting because it uses a Monheimer salt sponge, which intensifies the acidity of the bread while keeping the yeast in check by adding 1% salt to the 80% hydrated sponge. And where Björn's version calls for Type 1050 (first clear) flour, I substituted bread flour in order to get a more open crumb. I also increased the length of his bulk ferment from 30 to 90 minutes in order to give the gluten more time to develop and to open the crumb somewhat.

I ended up with a lovely, crusty bread that features a tender crumb that's quite open for a 60% rye. The strong flavor of the medium rye is somewhat muted by the white rye flour (in Germany and Austria, they use Type 997 for this bread), while the Monheimer sponge lends a bright, yet subtle sour. After sampling the heel of the bread unadorned, I had it with Dijon mustard and roast beef, and then separately with mayonnaise and honey-roasted turkey breast. Every way I ate it, it shone.

***Monheimer Salt Sponge:***

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| **Ingredient** | **Grams** | **Ounces** | **Baker’s Percentage** |
| Medium rye flour | 315 | 11.10 | 100% |
| Warm (105°F/41°C) water | 255 | 9.00 | 81% |
| Salt | 3 | 0.10 | 1% |
| Rye sour culture | 32 | 1.15 | 10% |

Combine the sponge ingredients and hand-knead until they come together as a firm, dough. Cover and ferment at room temp (70°F/21°C) until doubled in volume, 12-14 hours or overnight.

***Final Dough:***

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| **Ingredient** | **Grams** | **Ounces** |
| Bread flour | 520 | 18.34 |
| White rye flour | 260 | 9.17 |
| Medium rye flour | 210 | 7.41 |
| Water | 634 | 22.36 |
| Salt | 26 | 0.92 |
| Instant yeast | 4 | 0.14 |
| Bread spice | 7 | 0.25 |

Combine the final dough ingredients in the bowl of the mixer. Use the dough hook at low (KA2) speed and mix until the dough is evenly developed and leaves the sides of the bowl, 6-8 minutes. Cover the bowl and ferment at room temperature until the dough has doubled in bulk, 90-100 minutes.

Turn the dough, which will be sticky and soft, onto a well-floured work surface and use floured hands to knead it back to its original volume. Divide it into two pieces, each weighing about 2½ lb./1.15 kg. Shape each into a boule or oblong, dust generously with rye flour, and place seam side down into a floured bread form or cloth-lined proofing basket.

Cover and proof at room temperature until the surface of the dough starts to show cracks and has nearly doubled in volume, 45-50 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 485°F/250°C with the baking surface in the middle and a steam pan on a lower shelf. Bake for 10 minutes with steam, then remove the steam pan, reduce the temperature to 430°F/220°C and bake until the loaves have develop a rich brown color, thump when tapped with a finger and the internal temp is at least 198°F/92°C, 45-50 minutes. Transfer to a rack and cool thoroughly before slicing.

***Baker's Percentages:***

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| **Ingredient** | **g** | **%** |
| TOTAL FLOUR | 1,305 | 100.00% |
| Medium rye flour | 525 | 40.23% |
| First clear flour | 520 | 39.85% |
| White rye flour | 260 | 19.92% |
| Water | 889 | 68.12% |
| Salt | 29 | 2.22% |
| Instant yeast | 4 | 0.31% |
| Sour culture | 32 | 2.45% |
| Bread spice | 7 | 0.54% |
| TOTAL FORMULA | 2,266 | 173.64% |
| % flour prefermented | 315 | 24.14% |