

SOURDOUGH STARTER

A sourdough starter is a living organism. Like any living organism, it needs to be fed, it likes warmer temperatures, and each starter may behave differently as yeasts in the air, flour, your hands may change its makeup. It is important that you listen to your starter's signs. AND what works for one person, may not work for another. There are just too many variables. This is why you see a person make a fabulous loaf the first try, and others go through dozens of loaves before they get a a fabulous loaf.

This starter is ACTIVE and not a new starter. It may take a couple days of feeding to get it acclimated to your environment.

SOURDOUGH INFORMATION

- Visit the **encyclopedia** section of; <http://www.thesourdoughjourney.com>

There is a wealth of detailed step by step instructions, flyers, how to's and information in an easy to read FAQ type format.

- Another informative resource is on You Tube. Look for **Culinary Explorations**. I've adapted his methods into my routine. And his website has access to an excel calculator he created to adapt recipes; lower/higher hydration, larger loaves, etc.
- Know that everyone has their own and sometimes militant ideas on what works best in sourdough. What many don't understand is that there are so many variables that there is no ONE WAY to do things. Do what works for your dough/bread. Experiment one thing at a time and find what A) you like doing and B) works. For instance, I use a low hydration recipe, it is easier dough to work with and has a more closed crumb (less holes). Many prefer an open crumb (lots of holes) that comes with a higher hydration recipe but the dough is SUPER sticky and harder to work with. Definitely not recommended for someone new to sourdough but you can work to towards it if you want. I personally hate working with sticky dough.
- There is also alot of good information on social media; from sourdough groups on Facebook and reddit to TikTok. My handle on tiktok is lauren45211 where I have a few sourdough videos. But be forewarned, I am a liberal. Feel free to visit my unfinished website; momslifetips.com for calculators and information.

TOOLS

See the attached Tools page for tools that are beneficial in this process. Many are nice to have but not necessary until you are sure you will be staying on this journey. I would recommend getting a scale and using it to measure your feedings, it is much easier and more accurate.

WHEN TO FEED YOUR STARTER

It is important that you create a routine that you will stick with. You have two options to choose from as far as how you feed your starter. I prefer to feed my starter right before going to bed.

Counter:

You can feed your starter DAILY and leave on the counter. Discard each day and feed again at the same time the next day. It is a good idea to try to feed around the same time each day.

This starter should have a **loose lid** allowing gasses to escape but protection from the air.

The weck jars have glass lids that rest on top and are the perfect solution.

Fridge:

OR you can feed the starter and put in the fridge (which impedes the yeast growth production) until you are ready to use it. It can stay in the fridge for weeks or longer even. Be sure to take it out a few days prior to your mixing day and feed it on the counter for a couple days to re-establish its activity. This starter should have a **tight lid** while in the fridge.

HOW MUCH STARTER?

- I keep a tiny starter (5-7g) and discard/feed it at night before bed. When I want to bake, I create a separate “levain” the night prior to desired mixing day, which I feed in a larger jar using a high ratio, while still keeping my tiny “mother” starter.
 - I created a calculator on my moms life tips site that will allow you to enter in your feeding time, when you want your starter ready and how much starter you need for your recipe and it will tell you what to feed your starter. Be sure to be add about 10% more than you need per the note on the calculator.
- I keep all and any starters on a small plate *just in case* (they can grow more than anticipated).
- Doing a tiny starter will help you reduce waste and it takes 5 minutes to feed.

WHAT TO FEED YOUR STARTER:

- I feed my starter All Purpose flour (it must be unbleached) with about 5% whole wheat flour, you can also use Bread flour but it is more expensive so I use this only for baking.
- Use filtered or bottled water (chlorine can affect your starter).

HOW TO FEED YOUR STARTER

Choose your feeding ratio (starter vs flour vs water).

The ratio you choose determines *how long it takes to get to peak* and *how much starter* you will end up with. Most **new** starters begin with a 1:1:1 ratio. That is; 1 part starter: 1 part flour: 1 part water. This will rise (double) fairly fast depending on a few variables but usually within 4-6 hours. Since this starter is active and established, you can use a higher ratio.

Instructions (nightly)

1. Stir starter well (to mix yeast)
2. Discard (remove) down to desired starting grams; 5-7g if keeping a small starter.
 1. Keep your discard in a jar in the fridge. This can be used for recipes such as pancakes, crackers, etc.
3. Add your flour and water, stir REALLY well ensuring there are no dry bits. When keeping such a small amount of starter, it is easier to add water first; mix all the starter from the sides and then add the flour.
4. Use a small spatula to remove starter from the sides.
5. Take a wet paper towel and wipe off the rim, then dry it. Mold can develop here as the yeast can not reach here to control it.

I use a 1:5:5 or higher (1 part starter: 5 parts flour: 5 parts water) and feed at night before bed so that it is peaked and ready to mix in the morning, should I choose to. I often do not measure the water and do a little less than the flour ratio, making sure the starter is thick almost like oatmeal. So for instance; if you keep 2g starter, using a 1:5:5; this would be 2g starter/10g water / 10g flour.

DISCARD

Once a starter is active and established (this does not include newly created starters from scratch) you can save the discard and use it to make many recipes. Discard can be kept in the fridge with lids screwed on tightly. When you remove this jar from the fridge, **be careful** as this is active starter, even while not fed, and can bubble over. Be sure to remove the lid and be mindful of overflow if you do not use shortly after removing from fridge. Yes, I learned this from experience!!

I use discard to make tortillas, crackers, pancakes, muffins, egg frittata muffins, pizza bites. The longer it sits in the fridge, the more sour it becomes. I typically like to use my discard within 2-3 weeks at most.