

The Ultimate Sourdough Starter Guide

Hey Friends, my name is Mike Greenfield and I'm the host of the YouTube channel Pro Home Cooks as well as the founder of Pro Home Cooks University. Throughout the years I've posted multiple videos on sourdough bread to my channel which have racked up over 10 millions views, but after getting the same troubleshooting questions over and over I created the most comprehensive sourdough course on the internet called SourdoughU.com.

I get so many questions on the sourdough starter from fans and students that I decided to create this guide to take you through the journey of making your own starter from scratch. The sourdough starter is the life force of your bread and without a healthy active starter your just not going to make great bread. Creating and maintaining a starter from scratch takes patience but the reward of that perfect oven spring is well worth it, so good luck on your journey to sourdough starter success!

Variables * - Sourdough bread making is an active living process. It can be very temperamental with multiple elements effecting the process and final product including temperature, environment, and fermentation activity. The timing in this recipe is based off a room temperature of 72 degrees Fahrenheit. If your temp is colder, then you process will be slowed down so you can adjust the times accordingly. If it's warmer, the process will be speed up so adjust accordingly. Baking is an intuitive process and this should be used as a rough guide in conjunction with the skills and knowledge you gained in Sourdough U!



How to Create a Sourdough Starter Completely From Scratch

-Ingredients-

Flour - Any type of flour will work but it's best to stay consistent. You can switch up your flour at any point without harming your starter but try to feed your starter the same flour for at least 2 days before baking.

Water - Filtered water is best for your starter to avoid chemicals like chlorine which can slow down fermentation but tap water will certainly still work for your starter

-Equipment-

Glass Jar - Any jar will work but it's nice to have a glass jar so you can see the activity of your starter

Stirring utensil - One day I will invent a utensil just to mix my starter everyday, but in the meantime my favorite method is to use a sturdy chopstick.

Day 1: Use a glass jar or non- reactive container preferably with a plastic or glass lid since metal will rust over time. Make sure that the container you choose is large enough to hold your starter as it continues to grow over the course of its lifetime. I would recommend a jar with a 1-quart capacity at best or a 12-ounce jar at worst. Once you have your jar picked out, give it a good wash with warm water and soap to get rid of any dust or bacteria.

Using equal parts of any flour of your choosing and water (I like to use 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour or 1/4 cup of water and 1/2 cup of flour) and mix together thoroughly with a chopstick or knife being sure that there are no dry spots of flour in your starter. Place a rubber band around the outside of the jar to mark where your starter ends. This will come in handy when it grows and the bacteria starts to come alive.

Cover your starter effortlessly with its lid. You don't want to make it too air tight but you also don't want any dust or unwanted particles to fall in either. The ideal temperature for keeping a healthy starter is around 68-72 F/ 20-22 C. (See "Troubleshooting Your Starter" for how to care for a starter at different temperatures.) This will give you the most consistent results so find a place in your house that would be best to house your starter.



- What to look for:** You should see a few small bubbles after 24 hours. If you don't, do not worry, just keep feeding!

Day 2: Whether or not you see bubbles add an additional feeding of 50 grams water and 50 grams flour. Cover effortlessly and place it back in its spot that is at the ideal temperature of 68-72 F/ 20-22 C.

- What to look for:** At the end of day 2, you should start seeing more bubbles on the surface of your starter, still no sour smell at this point since the bacteria is just starting to develop.



Day 3: Discard half of the starter and add an additional feeding of 50 grams of water and 50 grams of flour.

- What to look for:** At this point you should have a nice little colony of CO2 bubbles from the natural yeast colony that is now multiplying in your starter! Still probably not much smell at this point!



Day 4: Only discard some starter if you need to make room in your jar. If not, continue feeding your starter equal parts water and flour but now do it twice a day. Once in the morning when you wake up and once at night.

- What to look for:** You will continue to see that colony of yeast grow with more and more bubbles but at this point there's a good chance your starter will start to rise. However, don't be so concerned about your starter rising, it's more about seeing the bubble activity.



Day 5 & 6: Now that you are feeding your starter twice a day. You will most likely need to be removing around half of the starter each time you feed it to make room for the fresh feeding and its rise.

- What to look for:** You should be seeing more rise around this time along with starting to smell some sourdough notes as the bacteria continues to multiply and develop.



Day 7: Congrats, you've made it to one week! At this point if your sourdough starter is rising and smells nice and sour, you can go ahead with some bread making. I can't guarantee great bread results at this point since your starter is still very young but you should still get some bread.

- Float test:** One great way to see if your starter is ready for bread making is to see if it passes the float test. Around 4-6 hours after you feed your starter take a spoonful of starter and gently place it in some water. If it floats, that's a great sign that you're ready for bread making. If it doesn't pass the float test, it will need to sit for longer until it does.



Day 8 - 13: Continue feeding your starter twice a day for maximum starter strength and great sourdough bread results.

Day 14: After two weeks of consistent feedings, you should have a nice strong starter ready for some serious bread making. If you'd like to learn my step by step process for baking artisanal style bread at home, make sure to Check out sourdoughu.com for the Ultimate Guide on Making Sourdough Bread at Home!



Troubleshooting Your Starter

Higher temperature in your house?

If you live in a hotter climate, around 72-80 F/ 22 - 28 C, you can still maintain a starter at these temperatures! However, it will activate much more vigorously and you will probably need to feed it twice a day to keep it alive.

Lower temperature in your house?

Anywhere between 60-68 F/ 15-20 C is also fine as well, but remember, the activation of your starter will take much longer, possible 2 - 4 hours more before full activation, so be patient!

Tired of feeding your starter everyday?

You can always place your starter in the fridge to slow down the fermentation if you aren't planning on making bread. Just be sure to give your starter a fresh feeding before placing it in the fridge. Make sure to still feed it once a week while it lives in the fridge to maintain a healthy starter

Ready to make bread again?

When ready to make bread again, take the starter out of the fridge and feed it twice a day for two days in a row to acclimate it back to room temperature and "bring it back to life" for best baking results!

Sourdough Starter Rising Time

Hour 1



Hour 2



Hour 3



Hour 4



So you've made your starter and your ready to bake incredible sourdough bread at home? Check out [SourdoughU.com](https://www.sourdoughu.com) for the the most comprehensive bread baking course on the internet!