

Sourdough Starter

Sourdough starter is a living thing much like a house plant, when you first start to make the starter, most of the yeast comes from the flour itself but over time the starter will evolve into Your Starter. Your Starter will start to take the yeast from the air in your house and become unique to you. If you give some to a friend within a short time it will evolve into Their Starter as it will take the yeast from the air in their house. To make sourdough bread, you need a sourdough starter., which nothing more than natural yeast and it has been used to make bread for thousands of years. I have made starter out of a lot of different things and this is the simplest method.

You will only need three things to start.

Flour

Water

A glass bowl or jar to keep it in...clear glass with a lid, not metal, will be best as you can use this to keep your starter in. A mason jar with one of those plastic lids works great.

In your bowl or jar, mix together

1/2 cup flour

1/2cup water (do not use chlorinated water)

Day 1

Combine the flour and water in the container until all the flour has been absorbed . It will look like a sticky, thick dough. Cover with the lid and put the container somewhere with a consistent room temperature (the top of the refrigerator is a good place) and let sit for 24 hours.

Day 2, 3 and 4

1/2 cup flour

1/2 cup water

Add the fresh water and flour. You may see a few small bubbles here and there. This is good! The bubbles mean that wild yeast from the air and the flour itself have started making themselves at home in your starter. They will eat the sugars in the the flour and release carbon dioxide and alcohol. They will also increase the acidity of the mixture, preventing other "bad" microbes from growing. Let it sit for 24 hours each day. By the third day your starter should be getting nice and bubbly and have roughly doubled in size. It will smell musty and fermented.

Day 5

By day 5 (or even day 4) your starter will be ripe and ready to use. The surface will look frothy and fermented, it will smell and taste very pungent and tangy like.

At this point, your sourdough is ready to be used, or you can cover and store it in the fridge for one or two week. After a week or so, you'll need to refresh the starter. Take it out of the fridge and bring it to room temperature. Take or use out a cup or so of starter and then "feeding" it with 1/2 cup of flour and 1/2 cup of water. Or if you are using the starter, you can replenish what's left with equal parts flour and water.

Starter will keep indefinitely as long as you feed it every couple of weeks or so. Treat it like a

household plant that needs to be watered and fertilized regularly. It's very hardy and will even perk back up with a few daily feedings if you've neglected it too long. If a clear liquid, Hooch (this is actually alcohol from the wild yeast), forms on the top, just stir it back in. The only time you should throw away the starter completely is if that liquid has a pinkish hue or if it has mold on it, which indicates that the starter has spoiled.

To use your starter, simply replace 1/2 cup flour and 1/2 cup water in your favorite recipe for 1 cup of starter and forget about the yeast. Then, replace the used starter with 1/2 cup flour and 1/2 cup water to keep it going. Your starter will get better and better with age. Never add anything to your starter but flour and water.

Here is what your starter should look like.

