

How to Create a New Sourdough Starter: 2-Page Guide and Log

The Sourdough Journey – November 2023 ©

Tools

A one-pint (500 ml) wide-mouth jar with a lid.

Ingredients

50% Whole-Wheat Flour, 50% Bread Flour, non-chlorinated water. For best results, do not substitute other flours!

Prepare Your Flour Blend

Mix 300g of whole-wheat flour with 300g of bread flour in a food storage container. This dry flour blend is your starter’s food source for the first 10 days.

Schedule and Guidance

Follow the feeding schedule below. Document your observations each day. Each day includes a description of what you may typically see. Every starter is different. Some are faster than others. But all starters eventually go through the phases described below. Use this as a rough indication of what you may expect each day.

DAYS 1-3: Activate the Microbes

Day 1 – Initial Mix

Add 75g of water to your jar. Add 75g of your flour blend to the jar and mix vigorously. Cover with a loose-fitting lid. Do not discard or feed your starter for 72 hours.

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 2		Do Not Feed				

Some bubble activity and usually no rise. Smells like flour. If the surface is drying out, or you see water separation on top, middle or bottom, stir it up.

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 3		Do Not Feed				

You may see a “false rise” on Day 1-3. This vigorous rise is not yeast activity. It is a bacterial bloom. If the surface is drying out, or you see water separation on top, middle, or bottom, stir it up.

DAYS 4-7: The “Quiet Days”

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 4		Discard 80%. Keep 25g, Feed 50g Flour and 50g Water				

False rise subsides. First discard and refeeding. Starter may smell like old cheese, dirty socks, vomit, or acetone.

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 5		Discard 80%. Keep 25g, Feed 50g Flour and 50g Water				

No rise. A few surface bubbles. Thin layer of water separation on top, middle or bottom (Days 4-6).

Day 6 – Discard and Feed

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 6		Discard 80%. Keep 25g, Feed 50g Flour and 50g Water				

No rise. A few more surface bubbles. Foul odors. Typically the last of the “Quiet Days.”

Day 7 – Discard and Feed

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 7		Discard 80%. Keep 25g, Feed 50g Flour and 50g Water				

Starter begins rising in height. Vigorous surface bubbles. Begins to smell sweet, ripe and yeasty.

DAYS 8-10+: Slow Strengthening

Day 8 – Discard and Feed

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 8		Discard 80%. Keep 25g, Feed 50g Flour and 50g Water				

Starter begins rising faster and higher. Smells sweet, ripe and yeasty. May peak in 7-10 hours.

Day 9 – Discard and Feed

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 9		Discard 80%. Keep 25g, Feed 50g Flour and 50g Water				

Starter continues rising faster. Sweet, ripe, yeasty, and slightly acidic. May peak in 6-8 hours.

Day 10 – Discard and Feed

Day/Date	Time	Feeding	Temp	Surface Activity	Aroma	% Rise / Time to Peak
Day 10		Discard 80%. Keep 25g, Feed 50g Flour and 50g Water				

Starter peaks (roughly doubles) in 4-7 hours after 1:2:2 feeding at 74F/23C

“Ready to Bake” Test

Your starter should roughly double in volume after a 1:2:2 feeding in 4-7 hours at 74F/23C. You should see 3 consecutive days of fast rising before using your starter for baking. You can also keep your discard when it passes this test.

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