

Gluten Free Sourdough Starter

With your gluten-free sourdough starter, you can begin baking a variety of sourdough breads, pancakes, and more. Enjoy the journey of sourdough baking and the flavorful results it brings!



Equipment needed:

- [Digital Scale](#) Not necessary but highly recommended. Many recipes will only give measurements in grams, so if you don't already have one, it would be a good time to get one. Make sure it measures in Grams.
- [Glass jars](#). Wide mouth jars with straight sides work best. If you like to see how much your starter is growing there are a lot of [Starter kits](#) available with measurements printed. Plus you typically get a long straight edge spatula which are another item I highly recommend having. If you are purchasing a starter jar, I would recommend one that has a lid, not just a cloth cover. I don't like cloth covers, especially for gluten free since it can get contaminated easily and ruin a starter. I threw the cloth cover that came with mine away and only use the lid.
- [Straight Rubber Spatula](#) – these are a life saver when it comes to keeping your jars clean.

Ingredients

- **Gluten-Free Whole Grain Flour**, *brown rice, sorghum, buckwheat, millet or a combination of flours.*
 - **Room Temperature Filtered Water**
- **Before you get started:** Make sure your jars are thoroughly cleaned with hot, soapy water. Weigh your jar in grams on your scale. I like to use a permanent marker and write this on the bottom of the jar. It helps later so you know exactly how much starter you have left in your jar when you're feeding.

How to Prep for Your Starter

Days 1 and 2: Twice a day feedings

1. In the morning, combine 25g flour and 25g room temperature water in the jar. If you're using an absorbent type of flour (ie sorghum), you may need a little bit more water. You're looking for a thick paste-like

consistency. Somewhere between a thick pancake batter and peanut butter. Scrape down the sides of the jar and close lightly, not fully sealed but covered.

2. Leave in a slightly warm place all day out of direct sunlight. Repeat at night before you go to bed (about 12 hours later), adding 25g more of each flour and water to the jar. Stir, and scrape down. We're doing twice a day feedings in the beginning to help strengthen the starter quickly. I find that adding water first and making a slurry, then adding the flour makes mixing easier and ensures that all the flour is incorporated.
3. Repeat this process morning and night for two full days, or four total feedings. Tiny bubbles should be starting to appear. You should be noticing some bubbles by now.

Days 3 through 10:

1. **First Discard:** If you're seeing bubbles and have a sour smell, you're ready to discard. Day three you'll want to remove all but 50 grams of starter. Do not use this discard, it still has bad bacteria and could make you sick. Later in the process, you can keep the discard starter for baking.
2. For the next five days, you'll want to discard all except 50 grams of the starter every feed. Keep feeding 50g each of flour and water. You may notice your starter gets *less* active when you start discarding it. Don't worry if your starter seems less active during this phase, that is normal. Your starter is just gaining strength.
3. Keep feeding twice a day until you start seeing good bubbles and rise. Once that happens, you can switch to once-a-day feeds.

Days 11 through 14:

1. Around this time is when I generally start having a nice bubbly starter with a pleasant, yeasty smell. If not, don't worry, everyone's conditions are a little different. Continue feeding. If the starter is smelling good and yeasty and has lots of bubbles, you can start saving the discard for baking sourdough discard recipes.
2. After two weeks you should start seeing good growth and your starter will double (or come close) sometime between three to five hours after feeding. If so, you are ready to start using the starter for baking bread. Most recipes call for starter when it's at its highest, that's what we call peak activity. Peak activity is when you'll want to mix up your preferment for your sourdough bread.

Starter Maintenance

Once the starter is established, you can store it in the refrigerator. Until then, it should be kept in a warm (not hot) location, out of direct sunlight and not exposed to any direct heat. In cooler climates, some people prefer to keep it on a warming pad (not turned on too high), in a microwave with the nightlight on, or in an oven with the oven light on. I do recommend if you keep it in the oven or microwave that you place a post-it note over the on button to avoid baking your starter. I have had quite a few customers request a second starter and tell me that their significant other cooked their starter.

Regular Feeding Instructions:

What to Feed: After the starter is well established you can add a fine grind white rice flour to your feeding routine. The ratio between white rice flour and the whole grain flours should be no more than 50% white rice flour. Do not

use an all-purpose flour that contains added gums and starches. These can hinder the fermentation process, resulting in a weak or inactive starter.

Starter Feeding Ratios: You can continue feeding the 1:1:1 ratio, discarding the excess starter each feeding and adding an equal amount of flour and water. If you find you need more starter for baking and don't want to wait for it to build up you can switch to a higher ratio. For example a 1:4:4 ratio would quadruple your starter. See [Starter Feeding Ratios](#) for more information.

Timing:

If you keep your starter is at room temperature, you will want to feed it every day so it doesn't get too "hungry" and create a lot of "hooch". "Hooch" that forms on top of your starter indicates that it is hungry. If you have "hooch" you can stir it in if you like a strong flavored starter, otherwise skim it off and throw it away. Continue with the 100% hydration feedings, meaning you will discard down to 50g of starter every day, and feed it with 50g room temperature filtered water and 40-50g gluten-free whole grain flour. (A blend of white rice and whole grain or all whole grain). Mix well and cover lightly. If you are going to be doing a lot of baking and need to bulk up your starter, once it is a strong, well established starter you can discard less and increase the amount of flour and water, or increase the ratio. See Starter Feeding Ratios for more information.

If you are storing your starter in the refrigerator: you will only need to feed once a week. Let the starter warm to room temperature and following the same instructions as above.

- **If you are feeding for maintenance:** you can feed and return to the refrigerator once you see some activity (about an hour or so). You do not need to allow it to peak. If it does peak, return to the refrigerator until the next feeding. This does not cause any issues.
- **If you are feeding to prepare for a bake:** remove from the refrigerator, let the starter come to room temperature. Feed as normal with luke warm water. Make your preferment when the starter is at peak rise.

Notes:

The biggest issue – Mold. I have heard from people that attempt to make their own starter that their starter gets mold after a week or so. If this happens, throw it away and start over. The best way to avoid this from happening is to keep your jar clean! Start with a freshly washed jar and keep it clean.

- I wash my jars EVERY week. I did this when I first started making my starter and continue to do so. For this reason, I have a few jars. I empty the starter I want to feed into a new jar, add the water and flour to that jar. Then thoroughly wash the dirty jar. The discard jar, if there is any discard left, I empty into another jar and wash the dirty one.
- Use a straight edge jar. Most of mine are just wide mouth Mason jars. Nothing fancy or expensive. The key is to not have a curve to the jar where starter can remain after scraping the jar down.
- Scrape the sides down thoroughly with each feeding. I use a straight edge spatula for scraping it down. This removes all the residue starter where mold could form.

Building a starter from scratch can be expensive. Gluten Free flour is not cheap! For this reason, I recommend starting with a small amount of flour. Only 25 g and then discarding down to 50 g when you begin to discard. I know other sites recommend starting at 50 g and going to 100 g. This creates a lot of discard that goes into the garbage.

If you aren't up to putting in the time to start from scratch, you can always check out my Etsy Shop and purchase a live, very active starter that you can bake with right away! <https://oldworldsourdough.etsy.com>



<< Link to Etsy Store

Starter seems sluggish. Once your starter is established, you can experiment with adding 1 teaspoon of honey (or sugar/maple syrup) to the jar to help the bacteria. Do not do this too often, once every month or so should be enough! And only if necessary.