

The Sourdough Starter Care Guide

A simple weekly rhythm for keeping a starter alive, active, and ready to bake with.

Why starters need routine, not perfection

A sourdough starter is a living culture of wild yeast and bacteria. It doesn't need a perfect schedule, just a consistent one. Feeding it on a rhythm — whether that's once a day on the counter or once a week in the fridge — is what keeps it active enough to leaven bread.

Two ways to keep it

	Counter (active)	Fridge (dormant)
Feed schedule	Once every 24 hours	Once every 7–10 days
Best for	Baking multiple times a week	Baking every week or two
Ratio (starter : flour : water)	1 : 1 : 1 by weight	1 : 1 : 1 by weight
Ready to bake when	Doubled in size, domed top, floats in water	Fed and left at room temp 4–8 hrs before use

Weekly checklist

- Discard all but ~30g of starter before each feed — this keeps the jar from overflowing and keeps the culture healthy.
- Feed with equal parts (by weight) flour and water. A mix of bread flour and a little whole wheat gives it extra food.
- Watch for a doubling in size within 4–8 hours at room temperature — that's your sign it's ready to use.
- If it smells sharply of nail polish remover, it's hungry, not dead — feed it and give it a day to recover.
- Going away for more than two weeks? Feed it, then freeze it — sourdough starters survive freezing well.

This guide is a general reference for home bakers — starters vary with climate, flour, and feeding habits, so use your own senses (smell, texture, rise) alongside any schedule.