

Twice as Tasty

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Rehydrating Sourdough Starter (200% Hydration)

By Julie Laing

Here you'll find tools and instructions to help you rehydrate dried starter. Following the directions will give you a 200% hydration starter, meaning the culture is fed with equal parts water and flour by volume. You can find sourdough recipes designed for a 200% hydration culture in the sourdough guide at Almanac.com. *If you prefer to feed your starter with equal parts water and flour by weight, follow the instructions in the Rehydrating Sourdough Starter (100% Hydration) guide instead.*

Recommended Ingredients & Tools

- **All-purpose or high-protein white flour:** A chemical-free all-purpose flour or one with a relatively high protein content (perhaps up to 13%) will help when rehydrating dried starter. Other flours (such as whole wheat or rye) can take longer to rehydrate.
- **Unchlorinated, untreated water:** Avoid water with chlorine, chloramines, or fluoride; if you're uncertain about what's coming out your tap, buy a gallon of distilled water to get started.
- **Quart jar with a screw-on ring:** Quart-size glass jars easily store plenty of sourdough starter, but you can use any nonreactive container for which you can create a breathable lid. If you don't have a screw-on canning ring, a rubber band may do the trick.
- **Coffee filter or paper towel:** Unbleached coffee filters are thin and fuss-free, but you can use any breathable material that can be secured to the storage container.
- **Measuring cups:** Ones that are narrower than the mouth of your storage jar or have a pour spout will be the easiest to use when waking up and feeding sourdough starter.

Rehydrating Dried Sourdough Starter

These instructions assume you are starting to reactivate the starter in the morning and will be around for the first couple of hours, but you can shift the times to suit your schedule.

1. First thing in the morning, empty the bag of dried starter into a clean quart jar. Set the jar on a scale and pour in 1/4 cup of room-temperature, unchlorinated water; mix well. Stir occasionally over the next couple of hours until the chips break down.
2. With a fork, stir in 2 tablespoons of flour. Cover with a coffee filter and a screw-on lid, and leave the jar on the counter. The starter will develop a glue-like appearance (photo 1).
3. Around noon, stir in 1/4 cup each of water and flour. Cover and leave on the counter. The starter will start to look cakey (photo 2).



Photo 1. Glue stage.



Photo 2. Cake stage.

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4. Before going to bed, stir in 1/2 cup each of water and flour; cover and let sit overnight.
5. In the morning, the starter may look more balanced but weak (photo 3), or it may be bubbly and ready to use (photo 4).
6. Keep feeding the culture with equal parts flour and water (by volume) every 12 hours or so until it wakes up (photo 5). This could take several days, depending on the temperature of your home.
7. Once the starter is active and bubbly and you have enough to bake your first recipe with at least 1/4 cup of starter left to keep feeding and using, you're ready to go!



Photo 3. Weak stage.



Photo 4. Bake-with-me stage.



Photo 5. Rehydrated starter after 3 days.

Tips & Tricks

- Temperature can affect the speed at which the starter wakes up. If your house temperature is below 70°F and the starter seems sluggish, you may need to warm it. Set it near a woodstove; on a warm appliance, like atop a DVD player; or in a cold oven with the incandescent interior light turned on or a second jar of hot water next to it. Wrapping it in a towel can keep the temperature steady overnight. If you give the starter a temperature boost, make sure it doesn't warm above 110°F; you risk killing the wild yeast.
- A 200% hydration starter has less flour to "eat" between baking sessions than a denser starter, so you will probably want to feed it every week or so even if you aren't baking with it to keep it healthy. Keeping a large volume of starter (between 1 and 1-1/2 cups) in the refrigerator may help it sit unfed between baking sessions for longer periods.
- If you're new to sourdough baking, try the Sourdough Pancake Recipe in the sourdough guide at Almanac.com for your first bake with newly rehydrated starter. The Streusel Coffee Cake Recipe and Applesauce Walnut Bread Recipe get their rising power from baking powder and baking soda as much as from sourdough, so they're ideal recipes to use if you haven't baked in a while and need to feed up the starter. You want to ensure it is fully active by the time you bake your first loaf of Crusty Sourdough Baguette.

Hundreds of recipients of Twice as Tasty sourdough starter have used this process, but remember that a sourdough starter is a living culture. The person who gifted you starter is your best resource if you have questions or issues. You can also find resources and recipes at TwiceAsTasty.com.