

# Sourdough Starter Maintenance

Yay! You have a starter (you've followed a feeding schedule for 7-14 days) and you're ready to store it in the fridge.

But then what?

**Here's a simple maintenance plan if you are an occasional baker.**

**If you aren't baking on a weekly basis:**

1. Time to seal the jar with a lid and stick it in the fridge.
2. Feed it once a week, whether you are baking or not.
  - a. Take it out of the fridge, let it come to room temperature, about an hour, then feed.
3. Remove about 50% of your starter and feed with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of flour and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water.
4. Let the starter sit for an hour (don't worry about the rise) and then seal the jar and put it back in the fridge.

**If you are baking on a weekly basis:**

If you bake 2-3 times a week, you don't need to put your starter in the fridge. If your home stays cool during the summer, you can leave it on the counter. If it gets hot in your home, even if you do bake 2-3 times a week, store it in the fridge.

1. If you only bake about once a week, store it in the fridge.
2. Feed it the morning before you bake.
  - a. Take it out of the fridge, let it come to room temperature, about an hour, then feed.

3. Remove a portion of your starter -- how much depends on what you are baking. Your typical sourdough is going to require 6 oz of starter.
4. Feed with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of flour and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water.
5. Let your starter 'ripen' or rise until nice and bubbly. When your starter is bubbly, it's ready to use for baking. This can take anywhere from 1 hour to 3 hours.
6. Always use active starter when baking.
7. You might need to do two feedings if your starter is dormant. If your starter does not rise (and it did before when you were creating it in the beginning) wait 4 hours and feed again. Wait for the rise. Then you are ready to bake.
8. After you use your starter to bake, feed it again ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water) to replenish the starter, seal the jar and put it back in the fridge. You don't need to discard before feeding because the amount you used in your bake is considered the discard.

When in the fridge, your starter might develop hooch. That's okay. It's up to you if you want to stir it back in or discard it.

### **How long can you leave it in the refrigerator without feeding?**

No longer than 2 weeks.

### **How do you handle it when you go on vacation?**

You can have someone feed it for you or you can dry it and then reactivate it (I've never done this before) [here's a link](#).