

# Making Starter Step by Step

by Min Kim

The best results for beginning a sourdough starter culture are obtained by using organic whole grain flours, especially rye, which is very high in nutrients and fermentable sugars. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to begin a starter with all purpose flour alone. Mixing by hand will add more bacteria and yeast to your culture in a positive way but is not necessary for success.

Within a week your starter should be ready to use for making bread, although it will be most reliable and have a better profile of flavors by two to three weeks. In the first week there will be more homofermentative bacteria (lactic acid with an abundance of yeast) and in a few weeks, more heterofermentative bacteria (lactic acid and acetic acid for a better balance of yeast and bacteria) will have taken hold, giving the bread a more complex flavor. Once established, you can continue to feed it with your flour of choice, as well as adjust the hydration to your liking.

## Ingredients:

Whole grain organic rye flour  
Spring water/purified water

## Tools:

Digital scale  
1 quart mason jar

## Day 1

- Mix 100 grams whole grain rye flour and 160 grams water with a wooden spoon or chopsticks.
- Cover with lid and allow it to sit for 24 hours. Place jar in an area where room temperature will remain consistently between 72°F- 80°F (24°C-27°C). You can also use slightly warm water when mixing. Mixture should double and fall.

## Day 2

- Stir and discard 130 grams of mixture.
- Add 100 grams whole grain rye flour and 160 grams water and mix well. Cover with lid and let sit for 24 hours.

## Days 3-6

- Increase feedings to twice a day. Each time, stir mixture and discard 130 grams of starter and add 50 grams of whole grain rye flour and 80 grams of water and cover. Mixture should smell sweet and yeasty, and be doubling and falling with each feed.
- Scrape the inside of your container clean with a rubber spatula and mark the level of freshly mixed starter on the outside of your container with tape or a rubber band so you can track the activity.

## Day 7

- At this point you should be able to feed your starter with a larger amount of flour.
- In a new container, measure out 50 grams of starter. Add 100 grams organic flour (50g wheat/50g rye) and 100-120 grams water and watch to see if the



culture doubles and falls. You will be feeding this twice a day. It'll be ready to use for bread, but will take 2-3 weeks for best results for bread making.

- Remember to discard extra starter, there really is no need to keep more than 1-2 cups total. The larger in volume your mother starter is, the more you have to feed it to keep it healthy.

