

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: I am having trouble following the instructions for baking sourdough bread. It is in the refrigerator now; do I take it all out and feed all of it? Only take out the amount asked for in the recipe and feed that?

Answer: Sorry for the confusion. The basic idea is to keep your started well fed, ready for use and uncontaminated with other recipe ingredients.

- 1)** Take your master container with the Gold Rush Sourdough Starter from the Fridge and place it on the kitchen counter. Loosen the lid or cover so it can breathe fresh air.
- 2)** Let the starter warm up on its own to room temperature.
- 3)** Stir the Sourdough thoroughly.
- 4)** Pour out what sourdough you need for your recipe into your recipe bowl.
- 5)** Feed the sourdough Starter in the master container with equal parts water and flour. Stir thoroughly.
- 6)** Proceed with your recipe using the sourdough bowl. This may require its own feeding before use in the recipe. See specific instructions.
- 7)** If you plan to make more recipes with sourdough over the next day, keep the master sourdough container out the fridge, otherwise after a few hours reseal the container and put back in the fridge.

Question: I just started your sourdough starter and it does not smell very sour. I baked a loaf of bread, and it lacked “tang”. Should I toss it and start fresh? Can I add something to help it along?

Answer: Some companies add a sour flavor to their starter to carry it through during the beginning feedings as the sour develops through vigilant feedings. Gold Rush however, does not add any such flavorings. The sour will develop nicely with care and time. The more time you spend with your starter, leaving at room temperature and twice-daily feedings, the faster it moves to sour stage.

Question: I have just started the starter, it's been 24 hours. Can I continue to leave out the sponge and feed it every 6–8 hours? How long can I leave it out without putting it in the refrigerator? When should I feed it again after the first feeding?

Answer: you can leave your starter out and never put it into the refrigerator as long as you don't neglect your starter, and feed it daily. The refrigerator acts as a place for your starter to “rest” as it goes dormant once it reaches the colder temperatures.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question: Which is better to use when feeding the sponge, all-purpose flour, or bread flour?

Answer: Bread flour or General purpose is better. Try other flours when making your recipes.

Question: Your guidelines say to make the sourdough more sour feed it once or twice a day, and leave out at room temperature. This seems like to much feeding, are the directions right?

Answer: Like everything else alive, it needs food to sustain life. For the starter, food is flour and water. Do not ignore it for more than a day, or you risk killing your starter. If you don't have time to do this, or are going out of town, put your starter in the refrigerator to allow it to go dormant. When the sponge is in the refrigerator, the feedings can be reduced to once a week or month. Both you and your starter can go on vacation.

Question: I want to avoid all the time spent waiting for my sponge to come to room temperature, and feed. How can I do this?

Answer: By not putting your starter in the fridge, it does not go dormant and is ready to go into a recipe much faster. You must spend more time maintaining it on a daily basis.

Question: Does the container for the sponge, or choice of sponge hae and impact on the starter culture? My bread did not rise very much even using yeast.

Answer: The container can make a difference. Keep the starter or sponge in a non-reactive container such as plastic or ceramic bowl. Never use a metal bowl or container.

Question: I have been using the starter for a while now, and all of a sudden, the smell is off, just very odd. Should I toss it out?

Answer: A pungent odor always accompanies the sourdough. It is usually described as a baby formula smell, alcohol, or just extremely sour. If your starter is healthy and active, it is bubbly on the surface.

Separation is likely, the liquid is black, green or red throw it out.

Question: I have been using my starter for every week for 6 months. The last two loaves smelled very sour, and tasted too strong. How do I repair the damage?

Answer: You're a lucky one, as most people strive for this problem. There are three ways to correct the problem. 1) In your recipes try adding a half-teaspoon additional baking soda to your recipe t sweeten the mixture. 2) If you think your starter is too tart, dump almost all the starter except one cup and feed with several cups flour and water. This will reduce the strength of the starter. 3) Putting the starter in the fridge sooner after feeding will reduce acid levels.

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Question: Why do I have to add yeast to sourdough bread when the sponge is supposed to do the leavening instead of yeast?

Answer: Bakers yeast can be added to your recipe, but you are possibly replacing the natural leavening of sourdough with baker's yeast. This would result in sourdough-like bread and eliminating some of the great sourdough taste. We encourage you skip bakers yeast when ever possible to fully enjoy a truly sourdough product.

Question: How do you make the crust on sourdough bread really tough and chewy.

Answer: Place a shallow pan with 1-2 inches of water into your hot oven until steam is visible inside the oven. Put bread into oven once steam is visible. Egg or butter brushed on top of your bread will create an attractive glossy finish, but won't affect the texture of the bread.

Question: I've heard sugar helps the sponge, is this true?

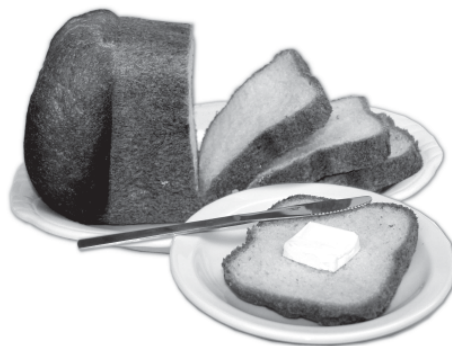
Answer: A small pinch of sugar once in a while can help perk up a sourdough starter, but avoid using it if at all possible. Adding too much sugar can make sourdough tough and rubbery.

Question: Can I use the Gold Rush Sourdough Starter as a Friendship Bread, and give away bits of my sponge to start my friends out with their own?

Answer: Sure go ahead. Feed you starter and get it sour for at least a month. Once your starter is baking sourdough, suitable to your palate, start setting aside some starter in a separate container, to give away to your friends. Pass along feeding instructions.

Question: Does the starter freeze well, I have to go away on an extended vacation?

Answer: Do not freeze you starter. It saves best in the refrigerator where it is dormant. If it is healthy, it should be able to withstand a couple of weeks without feeding. Feed it immediately upon return; look for signs of life such as bubbling and sour smell. It is important that the container while it is in the fridge, be tightly sealed to avoid foreign molds to take hold.



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