Buttered Up BAKERY

Your First Sourdough Loaf

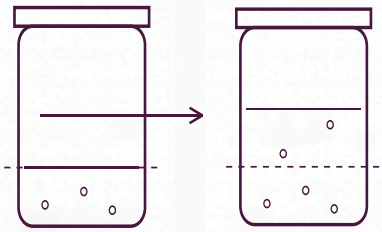
Your free Buttered Up Bakery starter is already a living culture. You do not need to grow one from scratch. This guide takes you from feeding it to baking one loaf. Plan a preparation day, a dough day and baking the next morning. Most of the time is waiting.

Equipment

digital gram scale, large bowl and cover, straight-sided clear jar (at least 500ml) and loose lid, spoon, clean kitchen towel and medium bowl or proofing basket, parchment rated for baking temperature, sharp blade, 4–6 quart Dutch oven with lid rated to 450°F (232°C), oven mitts.

First time only — soften your bakery starter

Our bakery starter is firm and whole-wheat. This guide uses a softer starter. **Keep** 20g of your bakery starter in a clean jar, **stir in 60g** room-temperature water and 60g unbleached all-purpose flour. **Mark** the starting level, **loosely cover** and leave at 72–78°F (22–26°C). After it has risen and begins to fall, **repeat**: keep 20g and add 60g water + 60g flour. Repeat if needed until it reliably doubles after a feeding. This may take a few feedings. **Do not bake** with a sluggish starter.



Every regular feed

Keep 20g starter, add 60g water and 60g flour. Stir, mark level, loosely cover. Total 140g. Remove the extra starter before feeding; discard it or use in a cooked discard recipe.

20g	+	60g	+	60g	=	140g
starter		water		flour		

One-time setup vs. regular feeds

1×

First time only: soften your bakery starter until it reliably doubles after feeding. This may take a few feedings. **Do not bake** with a sluggish starter.

Every regular feed: keep 20g, add 60g water and 60g flour. Total 140g. Remove the extra starter before feeding.

Ready for bread

Doubled in height, bubbles throughout, top rounded or just beginning to flatten. Often about 4–8 hours in a warm room; colder kitchens take longer. Follow the rise, not the clock. Use it near its highest point, before it sinks. No float test needed.

Mix and let the dough rise

One loaf

500g bread flour
325g room-temperature water
100g active fed starter from page 1
10g salt

Use a scale; equal grams of flour and water are not equal cup measures.
No commercial yeast or mixer needed.

Before you mix

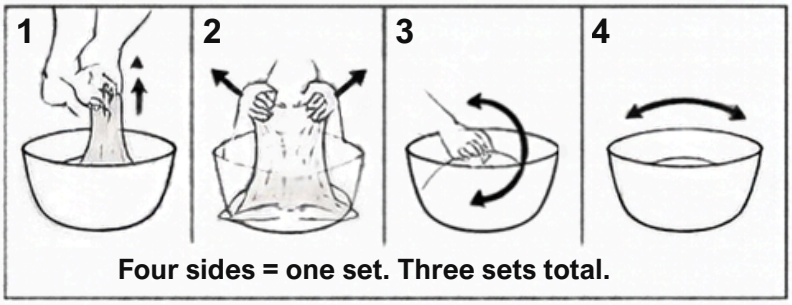
Save at least 20g of your starter for the next feeding.

Do not put the entire jar into your dough.

Feed the saved 20g using page 1.

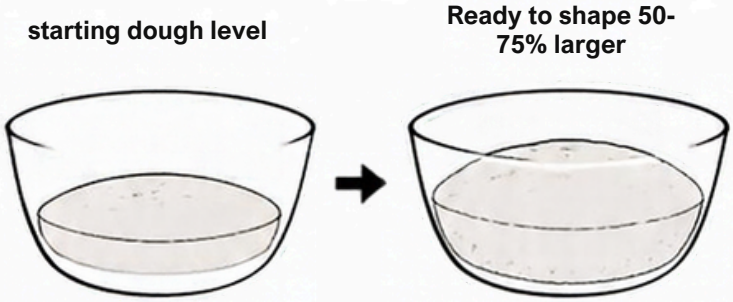
1 **Mix:** Stir 100g active starter into 325g water. Add 500g bread flour and 10g salt. Mix with a spoon, then your hand until no dry flour remains. The dough will be sticky. Cover and rest 30 minutes.

2 **Fold three times:** With a damp hand, lift one side of the dough until it resists and fold it over the center. Turn the bowl a quarter turn; repeat on the other three sides. That is one set. Cover.
Do 3 sets total, 30 minutes apart.
First set after the initial 30-minute rest.



Four sides = one set. Three sets total.

3 **Let rise:** After the last set, cover and leave until dough is about 50–75% larger, puffier and slightly jiggly, with bubbles at the edges. It need not double. Allow roughly 4-8 hours TOTAL from initial mixing at 72–78°F; cooler kitchens can take longer, warm kitchens can be faster. Check the dough, not just elapsed time.

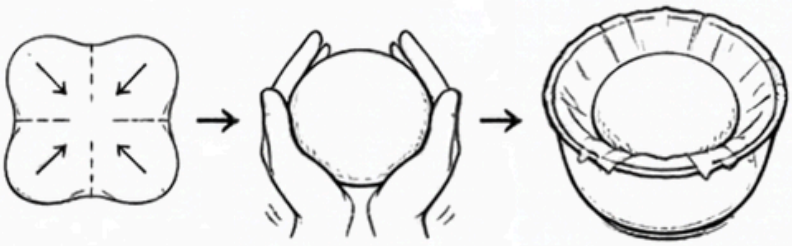


Sticky is normal

Dampen hands for folds.
Do not keep adding flour.
Use bread flour for your first loaf.

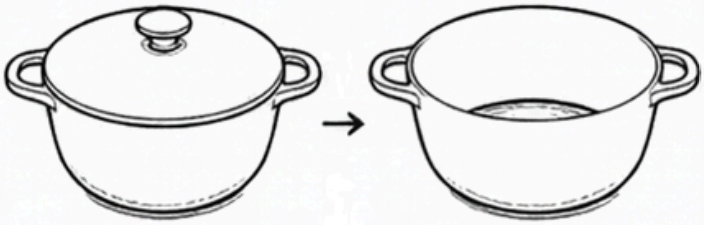
Shape tonight and bake tomorrow

4 **Shape:** Lightly flour the counter. Ease the risen dough out gently. Fold the edges toward the center to make a round parcel. Turn it seam-side down. Cup your hands around it and draw it toward you a few short times to tighten the surface. Stop if it tears. Line a medium bowl with a clean towel and flour the towel generously (rice flour works well). Place dough in the bowl seam-side UP. Cover so it does not dry out.



5 **Refrigerate:** Put the covered bowl in the refrigerator for 8–16 hours. Bake directly from the fridge the next morning. No extra counter rise required.

6 **Heat:** Preheat oven with the empty covered Dutch oven inside to 450°F (232°C) for 45 minutes. Follow the pot manufacturer's empty-preheat and temperature limits.



7 **Score and bake:** Turn cold dough onto baking parchment, seam-side DOWN. Make one confident slash about 1/2 inch (1cm) deep across the top with a sharp blade. Wearing oven mitts, lower into the hot pot using the parchment. Cover and bake 25 minutes at 450°F. Remove lid carefully, then bake 20–25 minutes more until deeply browned. If measured, center is about 205-210°F (96-99°C). Use color and a fully baked center, not a single exact temperature cutoff.

8 **Cool:** Lift onto a rack. Wait at least 2 hours before slicing, the inside is still setting.

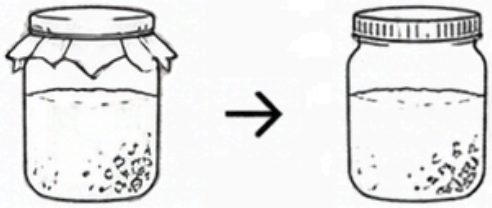
Pot, lid and escaping steam are very hot. Keep mitts on for every touch.

- [ ] Saved starter
- [ ] Dough rose before shaping
- [ ] Fridge overnight
- [ ] Oven and pot preheated
- [ ] Cooled before slicing

Keep your starter and solve the common problems

☐ **One-time (page 1):**
Soften and strengthen your starter.

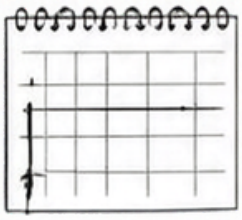
☐ **Recurring care (this page):**
Keep it healthy and ready to bake.



Between baking days	Before the next loaf	Know what you see
Feed your saved starter using 20g starter +60g water +60g flour. Leave loosely covered at room temperature for 1-2 hours until some bubbles begin, then refrigerate with a lid that is not airtight. Feed about once a week even if you are not baking. At each feed keep only 20g before adding fresh flour and water.	Take starter out 1-2 days before you plan to mix. Feed using the same formula; keep at room temperature. If sluggish, repeat feedings about every 12 hours until it reliably doubles after feeding. Use near peak for your loaf. Store the saved portion again as above. If keeping starter continuously at room temperature instead, feed about every 12 hours.	Grayish liquid or an alcohol smell usually means hungry; stir it in and feed. Fuzzy mold, pink or orange streaks, or a rotten smell: throw away the entire starter and clean the jar thoroughly; get fresh starter.

Troubleshooting

	Starter has not doubled →	Give it more time in a comfortably warm place; feed again as needed. Do not mix a loaf until it rises reliably. Avoid a hot oven.
	Dough hardly rises →	Starter may be weak or room too cool. Wait for the rise signs on page 2.
	Dough spreads flat →	It may have risen too long or been shaped loosely. Bake it anyway; next time shape sooner and tighten gently.
	Inside is gummy →	Cool fully before cutting and bake until well browned; weak starter or too little dough rise can also cause this.



An example rhythm, not a deadline

Prep day soften and strengthen starter. Dough day morning feed; around midday when doubled mix; afternoon fold and wait; evening when puffy shape and refrigerate. Next morning preheat, bake and cool. If starter is not ready, move the dough day.