

Cook With Sourdough

Did you know, sourdough bread is not necessarily “sour.” It has a complex flavor that can be mild or tangy, depending on how the starter is made. Sourdough is slow-fermented bread that is made without yeast. It is made with a live fermented culture, which acts as a leavener instead of using yeast. Sourdough starters and the slow-fermentation process used can be traced back thousands of years before the commercial type yeast we use today was available for baking.

Interestingly, because the slow-fermentation process breaks down hard-to-digest proteins and enzymes found in wheat, people who have a sensitivity to gluten can often eat sourdough without having digestive problems. Traditional sourdough, made without yeast, ferments due to “wild yeast” and lactic acid bacteria. Other fermented foods contain lactic acid bacteria, too, such as yogurt, pickles, and sauerkraut. The lactic acid bacteria in sourdough bread may be able to release antioxidants during sourdough fermentation. The wild yeasts act as probiotics in the sourdough. The sourdough starter contains both probiotics and prebiotics, but only the prebiotics survive the high temperatures during the baking process. Prebiotics are carbohydrates your body cannot digest, so they serve as food for live yeasts and other good bacteria in your digestive system. We always knew that sourdough was delicious, but now you know why sourdough is good for you.

Getting started with sourdough baking is simple. Having a good sourdough starter and properly maintaining it is key to baking any sourdough recipe. Creating a starter from scratch may sound intimidating, but it can be ready for use in about seven days. Sourdough starters can be made in various ways, using fruit juices, honey, or even potatoes to boost the natural fermentation. The two key ingredients are simple—quality flour and water.

Your local library and Extension office may have useful resources for recipes. If you use the internet to find instructions and recipes for sourdough starters and baking, be sure to find a tested and true recipe from a reputable site such as King Arthur Baking.

Maintaining a sourdough starter takes a commitment to “feeding” it, which creates more sourdough starter. When your sourdough starter is maintained correctly, it will always be “growing.” If you don’t use the sourdough starter daily, store it in the refrigerator, feeding it once a week. Instead of discarding the extra, try making a variety of recipes incorporating sourdough—it’s not just for bread!

For breakfast, try classic sourdough pancakes, waffles, or sourdough biscuits. Muffins, bagels, cinnamon rolls, and even English muffins can also be made using a sourdough starter.

For lunch or dinner, you can, of course, use your sourdough bread for sandwiches or as an accompaniment to a soup or other main dish. Creating crackers, dumplings, pretzels, flatbreads, tortillas, and pizza crusts are also fun ways to use a sourdough starter. Another way to use sourdough starter is to make tempura! Thin out the starter with beer or water, then toss vegetables, fish, or other ingredients in it until coated and fry.

Did you know, even desserts can be made from your sourdough starter? Cookies, brownies, cakes, quick breads, scones, and even pie crusts have a more complex flavor profile when made with sourdough.

The possibilities are endless when you have a good sourdough starter. There are recipes for the beginner to the artisan baker available at our fingertips, so feel free to experiment. You are sure to find a recipe that will excite your taste buds.

[https:// https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes/collections/sourdough-discard-recipes](https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes/collections/sourdough-discard-recipes)
www.healthline.com/nutrition/sourdough-bread