



1847 Oregon Trail Sourdough Starter

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*The Wild Yeast Born
When the West
Was Young!*

To REACTIVATE the starter from the powdered form:

1. Dissolve the contents of the packet with 3/4 cup warm (90 degree) water, add 3/4 cup white bread flour, and 1 teaspoon sugar in glass or plastic container (NOT METAL!).
2. Place bowl (covered with damp towel) in warm place (the oven with the light on is about 85 degrees- Test it first!) for up to 48 hours. It will get bubbly from the fermentation. IT'S ALIVE!!
3. Mix in 1 cup warm (95) water, add 1 cup flour, 1 tablespoon dried potatoes or use potato water and let sit in the warm place till bubbly again. Don't worry about the lumps as the fermentation will take care of them.
4. Now, you can store it in the frig till needed. It may develop a clear liquid on top, if so, stir it back in as this is alcohol keep it happy! It will need feeding about every couple of weeks, just add 1 cup warm skim milk or water, 1 T Sugar and 1 cup flour. Once in a while add 1 tablespoon of dried potatoes (or use potato water). If it looks sick, add 1 T CIDER vinegar to give it a kick in the behind! Give the excess to a friend or you can keep some of it in the freezer for several months between feedings.

When you want to bake something, bring the starter up to room temperature, mix in 1 cup flour, 1 c warm water or skim milk and let sit overnight to ferment. The next morning, remove one cup to keep in a covered jar as a starter for use next time, feed it, then do your baking.

Sourdough BISCUITS

1 tb Active Dry Yeast	1 c Sourdough starter
1 1/4 c Water-Lukewarm	5 c Bread flour
1/3 c Sugar	Melted butter or Margarine
3/4 ts Salt	

If you desire dissolve the yeast in warm water with a little sugar till bubbly. Sourdough is a yeast but rises faster with added commercial yeast. In a large mixing bowl add sugar, salt, sourdough starter, yeast and flour. Cover; set in warm spot and let rise until double. Punch down and turn out onto floured work surface. Roll out to 3/4 inch thickness. Cut with biscuit cutter. Dip both sides in butter or oil, and place on well-greased baking sheet. Let rise 15 min. Bake at 425 - 20 min. or until golden brown.

Sourdough HOTCAKES

The NIGHT BEFORE mix 1/2 c Starter, 1 1/4 c Water, 1/2 c Flour, and let sit in warm place till the NEXT MORNING then add 2 Eggs, 1 T sugar, 1/4 t Salt, 1/2 c Flour, 2 T Oil and ADD LAST, just before cooking 1 ts Soda.

Bake on a Hot griddle (water bounces). For WAFFLES just add a little more flour! Sourdough BISCUITS: If you have dough left over, mix in some more flour for heavier dough, kneed a few minutes, cut with biscuit cutter, dip in butter or oil, and you have biscuits for lunch!

Alaskan Sourdough BREAD

1 c Sourdough starter	2 1/2 c Warm Water
4 T Melted lard (or oil)	1/2 c Sugar
1 t Baking soda	1 T Salt
8 c Bread flour (approximately)	

Combine starter, all the water, and 3 c flour the night before and place in warm, draft free place.

The next morning add other ingredients and knead till smooth and elastic. Place in greased bowl in warm place and let rise to double. Knead down again, shape into loaves, let rise to top of pan plus a little and bake in greased pans in moderate oven 375 for about an hour till done. When it is ready it sounds hollow when thumped. Turn out on racks, cover with dish cloth and let cool.

This should work with a bread machine also, just adjust the amount of water (1 1/4 c) to reduce the volume as it will not take as much flour.

Depending on the flour, especially whole wheat, it may be well to add 1 pkg dry yeast.

The Doctor's Sourdough BREAD

1 c Sourdough Starter	7 c Unbleached Flour
2 c Warm Water	1/4 c Wheat Germ
2 c Warm Milk	2 tb Sugar
1 tb Butter	2 ts Salt
1 pk Active Dry Yeast	2 ts Baking Soda
1/4 c Honey	

OPTIONAL: Add 1/4 c wheat bran, 1/4 c oat bran Add 1/4 c soy flour 1 c whole wheat, rye, or kasha flour (adjusting the white flour volume) to increase the dietary fiber.

Mix the starter and 2 1/2 cups of the flour and all the water the night before you want to bake. Let stand in warm place overnight. Next morning mix in the butter with warm milk and stir in yeast until dissolved. Add honey and when thoroughly mixed, add 2 more cups of flour, and stir in the wheat germ. Sprinkle sugar, salt, and baking soda over the mixture. Gently press into dough and mix lightly. Allow to stand from 30 to 50 minutes until mixture is bubbly. Add enough flour until the dough cleans the sides of the bowl. Then place the dough on a lightly floured board and knead 5 minutes until a silky mixture is developed. Form into 4 1-lb loaves, place in well-greased loaf pans 9 x 3 size. Let rise until double, about 2 to 3 hours in a warm room. Place pan with 3 c water in bottom of oven for steam. Then bake in hot oven, 400 degrees F. for 20 minutes. Reduce oven temp. to 325 degrees F. and bake 20 minutes longer or until thoroughly baked. Remove from pans and place loaves on rack to cool. Butter tops of loaves to prevent hard crustiness. Makes 4 1-lb Loaves.

BREAD MACHINES - BASIC RECIPE from The Bread Machine Cookbook by Donna Rathmell
German - Nitty Gritty Cookbooks

1 1/2 t yeast	Medium setting
2 c Bread Flour	If it does not rise as well as other bread remove
2 t Salt	it from machine after mixing, put in greased pan
1 1/3 T Sugar	to rise to double, (1 to 1 1/2 hours) shape and
1 1/4 T Oil	bake in pan at 400 for 30 to 45 min.
6 T Milk (mixed from dry or canned)	
3/4 C Starter	

My bread machine says to add the wet ingredients first, and then the dry ingredients (protecting the yeast from the wet stuff), then the butter in four pieces in each corner, with the yeast in a well in the middle. I baked it on Basic, Medium crust.

Drying starter

Cover a dish or a pan with plastic wrap or waxed paper to prevent sticking. After you have fed your starter and let it get active, pour some onto the covered dish. The thicker the layer the longer it will take to dry. I use a broiler pan and pour it 1/4 inch deep as I use a lot of it. This takes nearly a week to harden.

Set aside at room temperature till it gets brittle -may be a few days. Break into small pieces and grind in a blender, coffee grinder or food processor. There you are! It will keep a long time. The yeast has sporulated and will stay that way for years. At one time it was used to "chink" the walls in log cabins and some of that stuff has been reactivated.

Hard water

If you have hard water in your area (hardness is graded from 1 to 14 with 7 being neutral and 14 the hardest), add 1/2 c of cider vinegar per 2 cups of water used in the sponge. This will cause it to rise better as it reacts with the soda. It is well to add 1 T of vinegar to your starter pot about once a month as it likes the acid environment.

Soft water

If the water is too soft (less than 6) it may be well to add 1/2 t baking soda as a reading of 6 to 7 is best.

Sour

There is a lot of speculation about the sourness of bread. One idea is every once in awhile use dark rye flour to feed the starter or some in the bread dough. Another is to let it rise at a lower temperature (60?) so it rises longer and gives the bacteria a longer time to do their work. I have been told that the special San Francisco flavor is created by the bacteria they have in the water there which comes from the Sierra Mountains under the ground. Maybe so ????

History

The history has been asked for. All I know is that it started west in 1847 from Missouri. I would guess with the family of Dr. John Savage as one of his daughters (my great grandmother) was the cook. It came on west and settled near Salem Or. Doc. Savage's daughter met and married my great grand father on the trail and they had 10 children. It was passed on to me though my parents when they passed away. I am 76 years old so that was some time ago. I first learned to use the starter in a basque sheep camp when I was 10 years old as we were setting up a homestead on the Steens Mountains in southeastern Oregon. A campfire has no oven, so the bread was baked in a Dutch Oven in a hole in the ground in which we had built a fire, placed the oven, scraped in the coals from around the rim, and covered with dirt for several hours. I used it later making bread in a chuck wagon on several cattle drives - again in southeastern Oregon.

Considering that the people at that time had no commercial starter for their bread, I do not know when it was first caught from the wild or where, but it has been exposed to many wild yeasts since and personally I like it. I hope you enjoy it.

Editor's note

This document was OCR scanned from Carl Griffith's 1996 brochure, and mildly edited to modify some unique spellings. The unit designations are as given by Carl. The following equivalencies seem evident:

Tablespoon (1/2fluid ounce): T, Tb
Teaspoon (1/6 fluid ounce): t, ts
Package (of dry yeast): pk, pkg

Cup (8 fluid ounces): c
Pound: lb
Fluid ounce: oz

Editor's Note (continued)

Elsewhere, Carl recommended the use of organic flour and bottled water. The following recipes were included in later brochures:

San Francisco Sourdough BREAD, from Bread Alone by Daniel Leader & Judith Blahnik:

First make up a sponge and let it sit at 74 - 80 degree draft free place for 24 hours:

Starter - 2/3 cup
Water (dechlorinated) - 1 cup
White flour - 1 1/2 cup

Final dough:

Water - 2 cups
White flour - 5 1/2 - 6 1/2 cups
Fine sea salt - 1 T

Mix final dough and knead it for 15 to 20 minutes. Let it ferment at 74 - 80 degrees in a draft free area for 2 1/2 hours in a large bowl, covered with a damp towel or plastic wrap. Deflate the dough by pushing down in the center and pulling up on the sides. Cover bowl with a clean damp towel or plastic wrap and let sit in a warm (74-80) draft free place for 30 minutes. Turn out on a floured area and knead briefly. Shape into a tight ball. Cover with a clean damp towel or plastic wrap and put in a warm (74-80) draft free place for 30 minutes. Shape. You may divide the dough into two pieces and shape into two round logs or into round loaves (free form) or one large freeform loaf. Proof the loaves in a warm (74-80) draft free place till they rise 1 1/2 times the size - about 1 hour - on a floured towel. Preheat oven for an hour before baking. Bake on a baking stone at 450 for 15 minutes, reduce heat to 425 for 20 minutes longer. Turn out and thump the bottom to test for doneness (sounds hollow) and cool on a wire rack for 25 minutes before cutting. Spritzing the oven at the beginning and each 3 minutes for the first 10 minutes will make a hard crust. One can use two conventional baking pans if desired.

BREAD MACHINES - Neena Saylor of Iowa City, Iowa posted this recipe on the Internet which may help you with machines:

Potato BREAD

1 c starter	1 1/2 t salt
1 1/2 T dry milk	1 T gluten (optional)
5 oz warm water	1 1/2 T butter or oil
1 1/2 T sugar	1/2 c potato flakes
2 1/2 c bread flour	1 1/2 t fast rising yeast

My bread machine says to add the wet ingredients first, then the dry ingredients (protecting the yeast from the wet stuff), then the butter in four pieces in each corner, with the yeast in a well in the middle. I baked it on Basic, Medium crust.