

BLBW Sourdough Starter

Total Ingredients

Flour	1 1/4 cup
Water - <i>cold</i>	1 cup
Distilled White Vinegar (5%)	1 tsp
Potato - <i>raw and peeled</i>	1 small

Be sure to use food grade Distilled White Vinegar, no stonger than 5%

Equipment

- 1 - 1 quart mason jar with lid
- 1 - set measuring spoons
- 1 - 1 cup liquid measuring cup
- 1 - set dry measuring cups
- 1 - 4 cup bowl or liquid measuring cup
- 1 - rubber mixing spatula
- 1 - 10 cup (2.5 quart) mixing bowl
- 1 - coffee filter
- 1 - 9" x 13" pan or 1/4 sheet pan
- 1 - box plastic wrap
- 1 - set hot pads or oven mitts
- 1 - box bread bags
- 1 - cooling rack
- 1 - cutting board
- 1 - bread knife, serrated
- 1 - sharp knife, unserrated

Getting Startered

Your first week

The beginning process is the longest step, from start to a loaf of bread will take about a week but can take as little as four days. Once you move on to making your first loaf, you will begin by making your first sponge and feeding your starter followed by a 12 hr wait period. The remaining 5 steps of the bread making process will happen over the next 8-12hrs. It can be helpful to review this timeline in relation to your schedule in advance of when you start to determine the day and time of day it is likely to be best for you to first create your starter. After you've completed your first loaf, you will be able to use your starter to bake every 4-7 days.

The Breadline Breadwinner process differs from those you will find most places in that you will be using what is commonly considered "discard" starter in both your bread recipe and as a constant base for your feed. We use refrigeration in our method between each bake/feed, assuming a desired use of once a week. If you don't have access to refrigeration or want/need to bake more often, you may rest your starter at room temperature but you will need to do a bake/feed at least every 48 hours.

Our 1-3 loaf recipes all use 1 cup of starter so you can select the right quantity of bread for your needs each bake. Combined with our no discard method this means your starter will always remain the same size. This creates a very simple and consistant starter that you can count on to help you create an easy and familiar routine. The best part of feeding your starter is that it happens at the same time as making the sponge for your bread. This allows it to become just another part of you making your bread instead of it being it's own thing altogether, and it's the easiest part at that.

This can be done as often as every 4-7 days or little as every two weeks should that better meet your needs, as long as you are storing your starter in the fridge between feeds. See the section on "Doubling your starter" for information about multiplying your starter for more frequent or varied bread making or for gifting.

As you begin

Tips for success

It is very important that everything involved in this part of the process is as clean as possible. Wash all your tools and your hands well and make sure to sterilize your bowl and jar. See the section [Sterilize by Boiling in Knead to Know](#) , or you can use a dishwasher if one is available to you.

1) Timing:

Create your starter at a time of day when it is typical for you to be home and awake, ideally at or around the time when you wake up or go to bed each day. Be aware that while the time lines noted are the target window, a couple of hours either way won't hurt your starter process.

2) Room Temp:

Don't be concerned with the overall temperature or humidity of your kitchen. It's more important that you **don't place your starter, sponge or dough near a heat source** such as the counter above your dishwasher or near your stove top.

3) Flour:

The BLBW Method uses the following flours:
Unbleached Bread Flour, Unbleached All Purpose Flour and 100% Wheat Flour

All of which can be used to create and feed your starter. While you can use a 100% wheat starter and feed, I recommend against it as it is not as cost effective nor is it ideal for this method. When making bread recipes use the flour(s) specifically called for or consult the Flour section of "Ingredient Adjustments or Exclusions" in [Knead to Know](#) before making any adjustments.

4) Water:

This entire method and all it's recipes were designed, and are intended to be made, using cold tap water, directly out of the tap with no alterations. If you can safely drink your water so can your wild yeast. If you live in conditions that require you to boil or filter your water due to health safety reasons, do the same for your starter and bread as you would for any other cooking or food preparation process.

5) Yeast:

Temps over 95 degrees Fahrenheit will begin to kill yeast which is why our method uses cold water as an easy safe guard. If you keep your house warmer or colder than the 70-80 degrees Fahrenheit range expect your starter to be more or less active accordingly.

6) Salt:

Salt is one of the key ingredients to making bread so you'll want to make sure you have it on hand for your first loaf of bread. All of the recipes on this site were designed using generic common household table salt.

Day 1

Make your Starter

Ingredients

Flour	1 1/4 cup
Water - <i>cold</i>	1 cup
Distilled white vinegar (5%)	1 tsp
Potato - <i>raw and peeled</i>	1 small

Be sure to use food grade Distilled White Vinegar, no stonger than 5%. Vinegar is a very important component to this step! Wild yeast is hardy and thrives in a slightly acidic environment that other microorganisms cannot tolerate. At this stage, without the vinegar, you have an increased risk of dangerous bacterial growth as well as dramatically slowing the growth rate of your yeast as they have to compete with other microorgansims for food and water.

Wash raw potato well in hot water, peel throughly and place in your sterilized mason jar

In your liquid measuring cup combine 1 cp cold water with 1 tsp vinegar (5%)

In a sterilized 4 cp bowl, mix together the flour and vinegar water

Carefully pour/scrape your mixture into your sterilized 1qt mason jar covering the potato

Dampen your coffee filter with water and drape to fully cover the mouth of your mason jar so the starter can breathe (If you do not have a coffee filter you can also use cheesecloth, muslin or other clean fabric)

Rest at room temp for 24hrs

Don't place your starter anywhere dark. Mold likes nothing better than the absence of light and a damp food source. Even with sterilization and vinegar, you risk mold growth if your starter is deprived of light. It's important that your starter be out of the way of your everyday kitchen activities so you aren't constantly moving it but it will need access to a light source during regular daylight hours. Light also helps yeast growth, although not required, don't be concerned if you have it in an area where it recieves more than 12hrs of light.

Day 2

Remove the coffee filter

Remove the coffee filter and discard. If there is a thin layer of liquid on the surface of your starter, slowly and carefully pour **only the liquid** off your starter and discard the liquid. Do this throughout the starting process, before stirring, any time there is liquid at the surface.

Thoroughly stir your starter and **cover with the jar lid, tightening lightly**

Rest at room temp for 24hrs

At this stage there may be some brown/black discoloration to the potato, flour mixture or the liquid forming on top, especially if you are using 100% wheat flour. This is natural oxidation and is completely safe and normal. While it is unlikely to occur, very rarely your starter could turn pinkish or reddish or show signs of mold. In this case discard the starter and begin again because dangerous microorganisms have ruined your starter. This is more likely to occur with a dormant or neglected starter but can happen when you are in the beginning stages.

Day 3

Check your starter

If there is a thin layer of liquid on the surface of your starter, slowly and carefully pour **only the liquid** off your starter and discard the liquid. Do this throughout the starting process, before stirring, any time there is liquid at the surface.

Thoroughly stir your starter and recover with the jar lid

Rest at room temp for 24hrs

Days 4-6

Bubble Watch

Repeat "Day 3" (step 5) every 24hrs, until you see the liquid layer on the surface increase to an amount of **roughly 1- 2 tsp**

After you get a liquid pour off that is roughly 1- 2 tsp: Thoroughly stir your starter and recover with the jar lid as usual

Rest at room temp for **12hrs**

Remove your jar lid and check for bubbles starting to displace any liquid on top of your starter

When you see bubbles: DO NOT STIR or otherwise disturb

Recover with the jar lid and leave your starter jar covered and at room temp for the next **12hrs**, until bubbles completely cover the surface of your starter, you may even see a full layer of foam develop.

At this point move on to step 7 even if you are not yet at day 5

Days 5-7

First feed and sponge

12 hrs from when you first see bubbles, the surface of your starter should be completely covered with bubbles, you may even see a full layer of foam develop. This means it's time to feed your starter and make your first loaf sponge. Click the "First Loaf Recipe" link below for your next steps.