



How-To Guide: Starter from Scratch (Fruit Fermentation Method)

General Guidelines

1. Keep your starter on the counter in a warm spot (about 78–82°F) for the first few days.
2. Cover loosely so air can circulate.
3. Mark the container so you can see when it has expanded. A rubber band is a great way you see the starting line and the rise.

Prepare the Raisin Fermentation

1. 80g Raisins
2. 200g Filtered Water (**DO NOT** use the local water from tap or RO)
3. Ferment the raisin water until the raisins begin to **float and produce significant gas bubbles.**
(This step can take 3 to 7 days)

Prepare the New Starter Fermentation

Day 1

Prepare the new starter in a clean glass jar

1. Add 50 g of the raisin ferment water (save remainder for next feeding)
2. Add 50 g of white wheat flour (unbleached not enriched flour)
3. Stir well, cover loosely and let it rest at 78-82°F for 24 hours

Day 2

Do Not Discard

1. Add 50 g of raisin ferment water
2. Add 50 g of white wheat flour to the mixture
3. Stir well, cover loosely, and keep warm.

Day 3 thru 6

Feeding the Starter

1. Keep 50g of starter and **discard** the rest
2. Add 50g of filtered or mineral water (**switch to water**, no more fruit juice)
3. Add 50g of white wheat flour
4. Cover loosely and keep warm
5. Repeat every 8 hours

Day 7 to 12

Transfer to Clean Jar

1. Stir the starter, then pour 35g into a new container. Discard the rest.
2. Feed at a 1:1:1 ratio:
 - 35g starter (from step 1)
 - 35g flour (whole wheat, bread flour, or a mix)
 - **Day 7 Only** - 30–33g water (**use 2–5 g less water than flour the first time** to thicken slightly)
 - 35g water Days 8-12
3. Mix well, cover loosely, and keep warm.

Notes and Maintenance

Feed at least once daily, timing feeds to the starter's peak. Feeding too early or long after peak can disrupt fermentation by diluting or weakening the yeast and bacteria population.

Watch the mark: once your starter consistently **doubles or triples within 4–6 hours** for at least **3–4 consecutive feedings**, it can be treated like a mature starter. This may happen before Day 12 but don't rush it.

Maintenance after Maturing

- Feed consistently, you'll get to a feeding schedule that works for you
- **Feeding Ratios** I recommend are 1:5:5 to 1:10:10 but you can use the ones you prefer.
- **I do not recommend** maintaining with the 1:1:1 ratio. Eventually your starter will weaken. 1:1:1 is fine if you need more starter to bake with in a shorter amount of time, just not for daily maintenance
- Suggestion - Feed at night with a higher feeding ratio for it to peak for use in the morning

Why feeding at peak matters

- **Feeding before peak** → microbes haven't multiplied enough → dilution
- **Feeding long after peak** → microbes are starving → weakened culture

What “**Peak**” means

- **Peak** is the point at which the starter reaches its maximum rise before beginning to fall.
- It’s observed by marking the jar after feeding and watching for the **highest level**, a **domed or just-flattening top**, and an **airy, bubbly structure**.

Signs Your Starter Is Ready to Use in Dough

Your starter is ready when it:

- Doubles or triples in volume within 4–6 hours of feeding (consistently over 3-4 feedings)
- Bubbles are visible throughout, not just on top
- Smells pleasantly yeasty or mildly tangy, not sour or “off”
- Holds a peak for a short time before slowly receding
- The “**float test**” – Add a small amount of your starter at peak to a glass of water to see if it'll float.

*This is not a foolproof way to test peak readiness but if it floats it should be ready to use.

Once these signs are consistent, your starter is ready to leaven dough! Give her a name, make her your kitchen pet. Treat her good and she'll reward you with fluffy, tasty goodies. Also, after she's ready you can save the discard in the fridge and it's good for a variety of uses.

Important Timing Note

Starter development time can vary. Some starters may be ready sooner, while others take longer depending on factors like:

- Room temperature (the warmer it is the **faster** it'll peak)
- Type of flour used (unbleached, fresh milled)
- Water quality (out here definitely use bottled water)
- Feeding consistency (should resemble muffin batter)

Focus on the **signs of readiness, not the calendar**. Let the starter tell you when it's ready. Remember to discard before feeding. You do not need to keep a large amount of starter if you aren't going to bake everyday. I keep a small jar on the counter and twice a day I'll discard or create my leaven for my bake schedule and then feed only 5-10g of starter that's already peaked. This reduces the amount of flour & water needed and reduces waste.

If you have any questions, please ask. Happy Baking!! And follow us on Facebook and NextDoor @PogieBaitBakery