

# sourdough starter and levain

RECIPE COURTESY OF BRYAN FORD

## INGREDIENTS:

### Sourdough Starter

500 grams (about 4 1/2 cups) rye flour  
500 grams (about 4 1/2 cups) warm water

### Levain

85 grams (about 3/4 cup) mature sourdough starter  
150 grams (about 1 cup) bread flour  
50 grams (about 1/3 cup) whole wheat flour  
175 grams (about 3/4 cup) warm water

## ACTIVE TIME:

50 minutes (10 minutes per day)

## TOTAL TIME:

5 days (includes lots of resting and proofing time)

## EASE OF PREPARATION:

Intermediate

## YIELD:

1 starter, for up to 4 doughs

## INSTRUCTIONS

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### Sourdough Starter

1. Day One: Use a fork to mix 100 grams (1/2 cup) of rye flour and 100 grams (1/2 cup) of warm water in a glass mason jar or any type of container that has a lid. Cover and leave at room temperature for 24 hours.
2. Day Two: You will probably see some sort of activity depending on how warm your kitchen is. The smell may not be so pleasant. Reserve 100 grams (about 1/2 cup) of the mixture and discard the rest. Feed another 100 grams (1/2 cup) of rye flour and 100 grams (1/2 cup) of warm water to the original mixture and leave at room temperature for another 24 hours.
3. Day Three: You may see the markings on the walls of the jar from a “rise and fall” of the new starter, along with nice bubbles and air pockets. This is good. The smell should be getting a bit more bearable. Repeat the process of Day Two.
4. Day Four: There will definitely be a good volume increase and a consistent amount of bubbling and air pockets. There should be a somewhat sweet and sour smell that is pleasant. You’re in the home stretch. Repeat Day Two one more time.
5. Day Five: By this point, you should have a ripe and sweet-smelling sourdough starter. You should see some movement of the bubbles when you jostle the container and a structure when you stir it. You are now ready to build a levain.

### Levain

1. Use a fork to mix the mature starter, bread flour, whole wheat flour, and warm water in a container, then let it rest at room temperature until the mixture is covered in bubbles and air pockets for 3 to 4 hours.

**COOK’S NOTE:** *My ambient room temperature for both of these processes is usually around 72°F to 75°F.*