

Starting and maintaining sourdough culture

Items needed:

- Glass, ceramic or plastic containers
- Spoon
- 1 organic potato
- Flour – rye or wheaten
- Water

Method:

1. Wash and peel organic potatoes. Potato peelings are very rich in lactose bacteria and wild yeasts (the basis of your sourdough culture). Select 3 pieces of peel without large eyes or disease.
2. Mix 60 grams rye flour with 80 ml water until a smooth paste is formed. Place potato peel in and blend through, being careful not to break peel up. Cover container with lid but not sealed. Culture needs air and lid will prevent contamination. Place in an area with no direct sunlight and constant room temperature.
3. After 2 – 3 days fermentation bubbles should be evident. This will depend on weather conditions. On 2nd or 3rd day open lid and study brew.
4. Mix well and smell to assess progress. Then remove one heaped teaspoon to a clean container, add 60 grams rye flour with 80 ml water until a smooth paste is formed. Place lid back on container and set aside for 24 hours. Potato peel along with old culture can be discarded now.
5. For the next week transfer a heaped teaspoon of leaven to a clean container, add 60 grams rye flour with 80 ml water until a smooth paste every day. This is feeding your culture. Discard old culture each time.
6. After one week, only transfer one level teaspoon of culture to your clean container, continue to add 60 grams rye flour with 80 ml water until a smooth paste if formed. Allow one more week of daily feeding for culture to mature.
7. On the morning of your first bake (the culture is now 2 ½ - 3 weeks old) transfer a level teaspoon of culture to a clean container and repeat feeding regime as mentioned above. Your mature culture is now ready to be made into a sourdough bread.

Hints:

- Get used to the smell of your culture; it should be sweet and pungent.
- Feed your culture at approx. the same time every day so that the consistency stays the same.
- Keep away from direct sunlight.
- Find uses for discarded leaven.
- Feed every day for the rest of your or its life.
- Do not refrigerate.