

The Shared Starter

One starter. Looked after together.

The Shared Starter is a Breaducating Britain campaign for schools, prisons, food hubs and community groups. Keep one sourdough starter in a shared space, look after it together, and use it to get people baking.

Get a starter

The easiest option: ask a local bakery if they can spare a little of their sourdough starter. You only need a small amount to get going.

Or make your own

You need: flour, water, a clean jar and a little patience.

Day 1

Mix 50g flour with 50g water in a clean jar. Cover loosely and leave at room temperature.

Day 2

Give it a stir. If nothing much is happening yet, that is completely normal.

Day 3 onwards

Keep 50g of starter, then mix in 50g flour and 50g water. Repeat each day.

Ready to bake

When it is bubbly, smells pleasantly tangy and reliably rises after feeding, you have an active starter.

A note on timing: starters do their own thing. It may take several days or longer to become lively and reliable, especially in a cool room.

How the campaign works

1. Give it a home

Keep your starter somewhere everyone can see it - a classroom, staff room, kitchen, workshop or shared space.

2. Name it

Let the group choose a name. It is much harder to forget to feed something with a name.

3. Share the job

Create a simple rota so different people get a turn to feed and look after it.

4. Watch it

Notice the bubbles, smell and rise. It is a very simple way to see fermentation happening in real time.

5. Take some, then feed it

Use part of the starter for baking, but always leave some behind and feed it again so the shared starter keeps going.

6. Bake with it

Make loaves, focaccia, pizza, pancakes, crackers and other bakes. Starter or sourdough discard can be used in lots of recipes.

7. Pass it on

Share a little starter with another class, wing, team, family or community group and help them begin their own.

Keeping it alive

If you bake often, keep the starter at room temperature and feed it regularly. If you only bake occasionally, keep it covered in the fridge and feed it before you want to bake.

The idea

Feed it. Share it. Bake with it. Keep it going.

The point is not to make perfect sourdough. It is to have something living that a group can look after together, and a simple reason to keep making bread.