

Leavening definition / descriptions

Name	Definition	Source	Type
Active Starter	A leaven that has recently reached its equilibrium yeast and bacterial population. If thick, it will be spongy, tenacious, and gassy. If thin, it will be frothy and bubbly.	1	Natural
Anfrishsauer	A German term for the first stage of the traditional German sourdough baking process made from Anstellgut, water, and flour.	2	Natural
Anstellgut	A German term for the inoculant to the first stage in the three-stage sequence of elaboration of a leaven for the traditional process of German sourdough. It is a portion of the ripe sourdough leaven saved from the previous day's bake and corresponds to the French term "chef".	2	Natural
Barm	A British term for a yeast leaven. In brewing, the term "barm" refers to the foamy yeast residue from the fermentation of ale, then used to leaven bread (different strains of <i>S. cerevisiae</i> are used to ferment both bread and alcohol). Today some Americans (including some San Francisco bread bakers and instructors) use the term "barm" to describe a natural leaven started with whole wheat flour or grains. A barm started from whole wheat grains or flour is a mix of natural or "wild" yeast and lactobacilli originating from the grains. As a by-product from brewing yeast, barm makes a fairly bitter tasting bread unless the bittering agents are distilled out. As a natural leaven from whole wheat flour and/or grains, barm produces a mild fruity buttery flavored bread lactic acid contributions from the lactobacilli and is not necessarily sour.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Biga	An Italian word for a yeasted starter. To make a Biga, a tiny amount of commercial bakers yeast is mixed with water and flour to a dough-like consistency and fermented for a long period of time, 12 to 24 hours or more. It is then mixed into bread dough for leavening, often with the addition of more commercial bakers' yeast.	2	Yeasted
Chef	A French word for a natural leaven starter which is retained and used from bake to bake. Sometimes it refers to a piece of old dough saved off for the next bake, sometimes to a starter in its first stage, either a batter- or dough-like consistency. In classic French baking a "chef" is "built" (or "elaborated") into a "Levain" (a firm dough-like consistency) which is again built (or elaborated) into leavening for final bread dough.	2	Natural
Culture	A stabile symbiotic mix of microorganisms in a medium such as liquid and grain (i.e., water and flour), also referred to as a "natural leaven starter."	2	Natural / Yeasted
Desem	Flemish word for a natural leaven. A slowly fermented Desem starter enhances the wheat flavor and creates a fruity, wheaty bread full of complex flavors. To make a Desem, a small amount of freshly milled whole wheat flour is mixed with some unchlorinated water, then buried in a 10 pound bag of whole wheat flour, kept at cool temperatures (65 degrees F or lower) and allowed to ferment. It is refreshed every day or two for about 7 days until it is ready to make into bread. Burying the dough ball in the bag of flour allows the leaven to develop from only those yeast and lactobacilli which inherently thrive on the grain and avoids the introduction of other microbes.	2	Natural

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Fresh Starter	Starter which has been recently demonstrated to be vibrant and active. Starter in this category can raise plain white (French or white bread) dough to a "more than doubled" volume in less than 2 1/2 hours after a single proofing (feeding) period, i.e. remove the starter from the refrigerator and proof once, then try using it. Starter which has been refrigerated for less than 5 days or so that was "fresh" before refrigerating is also fresh starter.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Friendship Starter (Amish or otherwise)	A sweet starter generally made with milk, sugar and flour used in a variety of baking goods such as quick breads, pancakes, muffins, coffee cakes, etc. Some versions of the starter are natural leavens, others are made with commercial bakers yeast.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Grundsauer	A German term for the second stage of leaven elaboration of German sourdough	2	Natural
Herman Starter	Is a colloquialism (of unknown origin) for a honey- or sugar-sweetened starter used primarily for sweet breads. It should be refrigerated and can be stored this way indefinitely as long as it's replenished every 2 weeks. Before using or replenishing, it should be brought to room temperature. If a starter turns orange or pink and develops an unpleasantly acrid odor, undesirable bacteria have invaded it and the mixture must be discarded. Two cups of the foamy starter mixture can be substituted for each package of yeast called for in a recipe. from THE FOOD LOVER'S COMPANION, 2nd edition, by Sharon Tyler Herbst.	2	Natural
Levain	A French word for a natural leaven mixed to a dough-like consistency. A Levain is made by adding flour and water or just flour to a "chef". This process is referred to as "building" or "elaborating" the next stage of the leaven. A Levain or Levain bread dough is generally fermented at cool temperatures. The firmer consistency and cool temperature fermentation of a Levain promotes the development of lactic rather than acidic acids, and a bread leavened with a Levain (Pain au Levain) has a rich, complex flavor and is generally not sour.	2	Natural
Levain-Levure	French for "yeast pre-ferment."	3	Yeasted
Levure	Commercial yeast.	3	Yeasted
Lievito Naturale	Classically, an Italian word for a natural leaven. Today some Italian bakers use the terms Biga and Lievito Naturale interchangeably.	2	Natural
Mother	This is a batter like starter of flour and water that is unrefreshed. See also, sour. Mother = chef - it only depends on the consistency (chef dough-like, mother batter-like). Most people here in the US call this just plain starter.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Mother Starter	Same as Refrigerator or Storage Starter.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Natural Leaven	A leaven of so-called "wild" or natural yeast and lactobacilli (sourdough, Desem, Levain, Lievito Naturale, some barm). As opposed to commercial bakers' yeast. Would also include leavens of natural yeast without lactobacilli.	2	Natural
New Starter	Any starter started from any dry source (commercial or homemade), or the air, that has not yet qualified as "fresh starter." This is not the same as "old" or "dead" starter, because these two conditions do not generally follow the same sequence of recovery stages.	2	Natural / Yeasted

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Non-Standard Starter	Starter which contains ingredients other than white flour and plain water. Some starters do use blends or alternative flours, and that's ok. Some starters use other ingredients such as a spoon of sugar (ok, but not suggested). Some starters also use alternative liquids such as potato water or milk. These would all be labeled 'Non-Standard Starters' in this document.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Old Dough	(Pâté Fermentée or Vielle Pate) A piece of final dough saved from one bake to the next. It differs from a starter only in that it is saved after the final dough has been mixed and therefore contains salt. Old dough can be used to leaven fresh dough. Depending on its age it may need to be either refreshed in order to strengthen its leavening ability or additional leavening may be used along with the old dough.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Old or Dead Starter	Starter which has been previously demonstrated to be "fresh" but which is no longer fresh since it cannot be demonstrated that it can raise dough after a single proof as described above. Risings which take longer than 2 1/2 hours indicate a starter that is either "new" or "old" depending on the prior life history of the starter. Note that in very nearly all cases of "old" or "dead" starters, that they can be revived back into "fresh" starters using the techniques described below. I have heard tell of starters which haven't been fed for six months being successfully revived using the given technique.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Pâté Fermentée	See - Old Dough		Natural / Yeasted
Polluted Starter	Starter which contains ingredients added by you or by nature, which are not normal to your starter. Examples include baking powder, salt, oils, eggs, or any other baking ingredients. Also, molds and other dark-colored microorganisms not normal to the natural symbiotic relationship that your starter normally maintains. These other microorganisms usually affect appearance, smell, and (especially) flavor. Normal ingredients are flour(s), water, potato water or potatoes, and possibly milk or milk products. Ingredients other than plain white flour and plain water change the habitat you are maintaining for your sourdough microorganisms and may or may not be wanted according to the characteristics you want your starter to exhibit.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Poolish	A French term for a sponge, a mixture of commercial bakers yeast, water and flour. Usually a wet mixture rather than firm. Classically the water and flour are in a 1:1 ratio by weight although in common use the term now equates to "sponge".	2	Yeasted
Pre-ferment	This term refers to any mix or starter that is allowed to ferment and build its leavening ability prior to being incorporated into final bread dough. This includes either a yeasted or naturally leavened sponge, a Biga, a Levain, a barm, a batter-like starter, old dough, etc. A pre-ferment contributes leavening and flavor to bread by allowing the dough longer periods of fermentation which enhances the texture and flavor of the bread.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Refrigerator (or Storage) Starter	A starter that is stored in the refrigerator most of the time and is taken out, refreshed and fully activated prior to mixing final bread dough.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Sauerteig	A German term for sourdough	2	Natural

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Sourdough Starter	A sourdough starter is a mixture of flour, water and oftentimes, yeast that is allowed to sit in a warm place to allow the yeast to ferment and a sour flavor to develop. Once fermented, the starter can be used in bread recipes to provide a characteristic sour flavor. In past times, this was the primary way yeast was preserved from one baking day to the next. San Francisco is famous for its sourdough.	1	Natural
Sourdough Starter	A stabile culture of natural yeast and lactobacilli maintained over time, propagated and continued for the purpose of leavening.	2	Natural
Sourdough Starter	A dough or batter that contains wild yeasts and bacteria, that has a noticeable acidity as a result of fermentation by these organisms, and that is used to leaven other doughs.	3	Natural
Sponge Starter	A pre-ferment of a wet rather than firm (dough-like) consistency. A mixture of only part of the bread's ingredients, generally all the water and part of the flour, plus packaged yeast or a natural leaven. The ingredients are mixed prior to the final bread dough and allowed to ferment anywhere from a few minutes to 24 hours (or more). Used to improve the flavor and texture of bread dough and to build leavening strength, meaning better flavor and better rising - up to a point. Too long a sponge will create bread that's so sour that it tastes bad, and won't rise properly.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Starter	A mixture of flour and water, as in a sourdough, or also incorporating a culture of wild yeast and lactobacilli, called a sponge, used as leavening in the final dough. The term generally refers to either batter-like or dough-like consistency mixes which are retained from one activation or bake to the next. Some starters also contain potatoes, milk, yogurt, fruit, and many other things. I personally haven't tried to use those.	2	Natural / Yeasted
Straight Dough	A single step method of mixing a dough in which all the ingredients are mixed into a single batch and mixed to develop dough.	1	Natural / Yeasted
Vollsauher	A German term for the third and last stage of leaven elaboration of German sourdough. When fully ripe (or activated) some of this is saved to become Anstellgut, and the rest is used to prepare the final dough.	2	Natural
Wild yeast	The only kind of yeast used when making authentic sourdough. Don't misinterpret that; there are many varieties of wild yeast, each with its own characteristics. Several different kinds of wild yeast can be found in a single starter. Unlike commercial yeast (which likes an alkaline environment), wild yeast prefers an acidic environment. It has to, to survive the acids produced by the lactobacilli.	2	Natural
Yeast Starter	A type of sourdough starter made with a cultivated yeast.	3	Yeasted
Young Dough	A dough that is under fermented.	3	Natural / Yeasted

1 <http://www.onecook.com/reference/brdgloss.htm>

2 http://www.baking911.com/bread/starters_terms.htm

3 <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-103619.html>