

how to make a sourdough starter

How to Make a Sourdough Starter: A Beginner's Guide to Cultivating Wild Yeast

how to make a sourdough starter is a question that many home bakers ask when they want to dive into the world of naturally leavened bread. Unlike commercial yeast, sourdough starters harness wild yeast and beneficial bacteria from the environment and flour itself, creating bread with unique flavors, better texture, and improved digestibility. If you've ever wondered how to cultivate your own bubbly, active starter from scratch, you're in the right place. This guide will walk you through everything you need to know, from the basic ingredients to tips for maintaining a healthy culture.

Understanding What a Sourdough Starter Is

Before we get into the step-by-step process, it's helpful to understand what a sourdough starter really is. A starter is a living culture made up of wild yeast and lactic acid bacteria. These microorganisms feed on flour's natural sugars, fermenting the mixture and producing carbon dioxide and acids. The carbon dioxide is what causes bread to rise, while the acids give sourdough its characteristic tangy flavor.

This natural fermentation process takes longer than using commercial yeast, but many bakers swear by the depth of flavor and texture it imparts. Plus, a well-maintained starter can last indefinitely, becoming a cherished part of your baking routine.

Essential Ingredients and Tools for Your Starter

One of the best things about making a sourdough starter is how simple the ingredients are. You only need two key components:

- **Flour:** Unbleached all-purpose flour or whole grain flours like whole wheat or rye are ideal. Whole grain flours tend to jump-start fermentation faster due to their higher nutrient content.
- **Water:** Use filtered or bottled water if possible, as chlorine in tap water can inhibit yeast growth. Water should be at room temperature.

Besides ingredients, gather these tools to help you on your sourdough journey:

- A clear glass or plastic container (around 1-quart size) to hold your starter.
- A kitchen scale for accurate measurement (recommended for best results).
- A spoon or spatula for mixing.
- A breathable cover, such as a cloth or paper towel secured with a rubber band.

Step-by-Step Guide on How to Make a Sourdough Starter

Day 1: Mixing Your Initial Starter

Start by mixing equal parts flour and water by weight. For example, 50 grams of flour and 50 grams of water is a good starting amount. Stir them together until you have a smooth, thick batter-like consistency. Scrape the sides of your container so the mixture sits cleanly in the middle.

Cover the container loosely with your breathable cloth to allow air circulation but keep out dust and insects. Place it in a warm spot, ideally between 70°F and 75°F (21°C - 24°C). Avoid direct sunlight or chilly drafts, as temperature fluctuations can slow fermentation.

Day 2: Observing the First Signs of Life

After 24 hours, check your starter. You might see a few bubbles forming, or notice a slightly tangy smell – signs that wild yeast and bacteria are beginning their work. If there's no activity yet, don't worry; some starters take longer to get going.

Now it's time to "feed" your starter. Discard about half of the mixture (this keeps the acidity balanced and prevents overgrowth), then add another 50 grams of flour and 50 grams of water. Stir well and cover again.

Days 3 to 6: Developing Strength and Activity

Continue the daily routine of discarding half your starter and feeding it fresh flour and water every 24 hours. Over time, you should notice more

bubbles and a pleasant sour aroma. The mixture will begin to rise and fall – this is a good sign that your wild yeast is active and multiplying.

If your starter is sluggish, try placing it in a slightly warmer spot or switch to a flour with higher nutrient content like rye. Remember, patience is key during this stage.

Day 7 and Beyond: Ready to Bake!

By the end of the first week, your starter should be bubbly, double in size within 4 to 6 hours of feeding, and have a tangy but not unpleasant smell. This indicates it's healthy and ready to use in your sourdough baking.

To test readiness, perform the “float test”: drop a spoonful of starter into a glass of water. If it floats, it's full of gas and ready to leaven bread. If it sinks, give it more time and continue feeding.

Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Sourdough Starter

Feeding Frequency

Once your starter is established, you can adjust how often you feed it depending on how frequently you bake. If you bake daily, feeding every 12 hours keeps the starter vigorous. For less frequent baking, storing the starter in the refrigerator and feeding once a week is sufficient.

Choosing the Right Flour

Whole grain flours like rye or whole wheat encourage microbial diversity and can lead to a more active starter. However, unbleached all-purpose flour works perfectly well once your starter is mature.

Hydration Levels

Most starters are maintained at 100% hydration—equal parts flour and water by weight. You can experiment with thicker or thinner consistencies, but 100% hydration is a great place to start and simplifies feeding.

Dealing with Common Starter Issues

- **Hooch layer:** A dark liquid on top indicates your starter is hungry. Stir it back in and feed immediately.
- **Unpleasant odors:** A healthy starter smells tangy, fruity, or mildly yeasty. If it smells putrid or like nail polish remover, it may be contaminated and should be discarded.
- **Mold:** If you see mold, it's safest to start over with a fresh batch.

Why Make Your Own Sourdough Starter?

Many home bakers find that creating their own starter deepens their connection with the bread-making process. It's rewarding to cultivate a living culture that can last for years, improving with age and care. Plus, homemade sourdough offers unparalleled flavor complexity, a chewy crust, and an open crumb structure that commercial yeast breads rarely achieve.

Additionally, sourdough fermentation breaks down gluten and phytic acid, potentially making bread easier to digest and nutrients more bioavailable. Whether you're baking rustic boules, sandwich loaves, or tangy pancakes, a homemade starter unlocks a world of culinary creativity.

Storing and Sharing Your Starter

Once established, your sourdough starter becomes a flexible baking companion. You can keep it on the counter if you bake often or refrigerate it for convenience. If you ever need to take a break, drying your starter or freezing a portion preserves it long-term.

Many bakers enjoy sharing their starters with friends and family, spreading the joy of natural leavening. With proper care, the starter you create today could be handed down for generations.

Embarking on the journey of how to make a sourdough starter is both a science and an art. Each starter develops its own personality based on your environment, flour choice, and care routine. With patience and practice, you'll soon be cultivating a lively culture that elevates your baking to new heights.

Frequently Asked Questions

What ingredients do I need to make a sourdough starter?

To make a sourdough starter, you only need two ingredients: flour and water. Typically, all-purpose or whole wheat flour is used along with filtered or bottled water to avoid chlorine.

How long does it take to create a sourdough starter from scratch?

Creating a sourdough starter usually takes about 5 to 7 days. During this time, you will feed the starter daily and wait for it to become bubbly and active.

What is the best type of flour for starting a sourdough starter?

Whole wheat or rye flour is often recommended at the beginning because they contain more natural wild yeast and nutrients, which help jumpstart the fermentation process.

How do I know when my sourdough starter is ready to use?

Your starter is ready when it is bubbly, has doubled in size within 4 to 6 hours after feeding, and has a pleasant, slightly tangy smell. It should also pass the float test, where a spoonful floats in water.

Can I use tap water to make a sourdough starter?

It's best to use filtered or bottled water for your starter because tap water often contains chlorine or chloramine, which can inhibit the growth of the wild yeast and bacteria needed for fermentation.

How often should I feed my sourdough starter during the initial creation phase?

During the first week, you should feed your sourdough starter once every 24 hours by discarding half and refreshing it with equal parts flour and water to maintain healthy yeast growth.

Additional Resources

How to Make a Sourdough Starter: A Comprehensive Guide for Home Bakers

how to make a sourdough starter is a question that has seen a resurgence in

popularity as more home bakers seek to embrace natural fermentation and artisanal bread-making techniques. A sourdough starter is essentially a living culture of wild yeast and lactic acid bacteria that acts as a natural leavening agent for bread. Unlike commercial yeast, this culture develops slowly and imparts complex flavors, textures, and nutritional benefits to the baked goods. Understanding the process of cultivating a sourdough starter is crucial for anyone interested in traditional baking or looking to explore the nuances of fermentation.

Understanding the Science Behind a Sourdough Starter

Before diving into the step-by-step process, it is important to comprehend what a sourdough starter actually is. It is a symbiotic culture of wild yeast and lactobacilli bacteria thriving on a simple mixture of flour and water. The wild yeast ferments the sugars in the flour, producing carbon dioxide that causes dough to rise, while the lactobacilli produce lactic and acetic acids, giving sourdough its characteristic tangy flavor.

The wild yeast strains present in sourdough starters vary depending on the local environment, flour type, and hydration levels. This variability is what makes sourdough bread unique to different regions and bakers. When comparing sourdough starters to commercial yeast, one finds that starters typically produce slower rises but contribute to better flavor complexity and longer shelf life of the bread.

Essential Ingredients and Tools

Choosing the Right Flour

The type of flour used significantly influences the activity and health of a sourdough starter. Whole grain flours such as whole wheat or rye are often preferred in the initial stages because they contain more nutrients and wild yeast than refined white flour. Rye flour, in particular, tends to ferment vigorously due to its rich nutrient profile.

Once the starter is established, bakers may choose to maintain it with all-purpose or bread flour for milder flavor profiles or specific baking outcomes. Organic, unbleached flour is generally recommended to avoid chemical residues that might inhibit fermentation.

Water Quality and Temperature

Water is another critical component. Chlorinated tap water can negatively affect the microbial balance in the starter, so filtered or bottled water is advisable. Temperature control also plays a pivotal role; maintaining the starter at room temperature (around 21–24°C or 70–75°F) encourages steady fermentation. Cooler environments slow microbial activity, while excessive heat can kill the beneficial organisms.

Necessary Equipment

A simple setup suffices—glass or plastic containers work well, as metal can react with the acidic environment. A breathable cover such as a cloth or paper towel secured with a rubber band allows airflow while preventing contaminants. A kitchen scale is highly recommended for accurate measurement, as consistency is key to a successful starter.

Step-By-Step Process: How to Make a Sourdough Starter

Starting a sourdough culture typically takes about 5 to 7 days. The process involves creating an environment where wild yeast and bacteria can multiply and stabilize.

1. **Day 1: Initial Mix** – Combine equal parts (usually 50 grams each) of whole wheat or rye flour and water in your container. Stir until homogenous and cover loosely.
2. **Day 2: First Feeding** – Without discarding, add the same amount of flour and water to the mixture. Stir thoroughly and cover again.
3. **Day 3 to Day 5: Establishing Activity** – Begin discarding half the starter before each feeding to manage acidity and volume. Feed with equal parts flour and water twice daily. You should start to notice bubbles and a pleasant sour aroma.
4. **Day 6 and Beyond: Maturity** – The starter should double in size within 4 to 6 hours of feeding, with a tangy smell and visible bubbles. At this stage, it is ready for baking or refrigeration for maintenance.

Monitoring and Troubleshooting

Signs of a healthy starter include a bubbly texture, rising and falling predictably, and a mildly sour smell reminiscent of yogurt or vinegar. An off-putting odor, discoloration, or mold indicates contamination and the need to start over.

If the starter is sluggish, adjusting the feeding schedule, temperature, or flour type can help. Some bakers add a small amount of pineapple juice or commercial yeast initially to jumpstart fermentation, but purists prefer relying solely on wild yeast.

Maintenance and Feeding Schedules

Once established, a sourdough starter requires regular feeding to stay active. If baking daily, keeping the starter at room temperature with twice-daily feedings is ideal. For less frequent baking, refrigeration slows microbial activity, and weekly feedings suffice.

Feeding involves discarding a portion of the starter and replenishing it with fresh flour and water to maintain a balanced microbial ecosystem. The hydration level (ratio of water to flour) can be adjusted to create a thicker or thinner starter, influencing fermentation speed and flavor development.

Benefits and Considerations of Using a Homemade Sourdough Starter

The advantages of cultivating your own sourdough starter are manifold. It offers unparalleled flavor complexity, health benefits from natural fermentation, and a connection to traditional baking methods. Sourdough bread often has a lower glycemic index and improved digestibility due to the breakdown of phytic acid during fermentation.

However, maintaining a starter requires commitment and patience. Variability in environmental conditions means that the starter's behavior can fluctuate, necessitating adjustments in feeding and storage. Additionally, the initial waiting period to develop a robust starter may deter some beginners.

Comparing Homemade Starters to Store-Bought Options

While commercial sourdough starters or dried cultures offer convenience, they may lack the unique microbial diversity found in home-cultivated starters. Homemade starters adapt to their local environment, imparting distinct

flavors and characteristics that are difficult to replicate commercially.

Integrating Sourdough Starter into Your Baking Routine

Once your starter is active and healthy, it becomes the foundation for a variety of baked goods beyond bread, including pancakes, waffles, and pizza dough. Scaling recipes to incorporate sourdough starter instead of commercial yeast requires understanding its fermentation timing and acidity.

Experimentation is key to mastering sourdough baking, as factors like flour type, hydration, and ambient temperature influence results. Keeping a baking journal can help track feeding schedules, starter performance, and recipe modifications.

In essence, learning how to make a sourdough starter opens a gateway to a rewarding baking journey that connects craftsmanship, science, and culinary art. The process demands attentiveness and respect for natural fermentation but offers a profound sense of accomplishment and delicious rewards in return.

[How To Make A Sourdough Starter](#)

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how to make a sourdough starter: Make Your Own Sourdough Starter Teresa Greenway, 2015-03-20 Learn how to make your own sourdough starter so you can bake wonderful sourdough bread that will amaze your family and friends. This little booklet explains, with easy to understand step by step instructions, how to get started, what ingredients you will need and the science behind the myths. There are formulas for different types of sourdough starters and for a motherdough pre-ferment. You will also learn what hydration means in baker's terms and how to care for your starter, feed, freeze, dry and store it. Sourdough baking is easy and fun but you need a sourdough starter first. So come on, let's get started!ContentsCapture and Harness the Wild YeastContents Introduction How to Make Your Own Sourdough Starter Gather Your Equipment and Ingredients The Container Flour Water Juice Salt The process How to Make a 100% Hydration Starter How to Make a 166% Hydration Starter How to Change the Hydration Level Convert a 100% Starter to a 166% Starter When Can I Use My Starter? Doubling Test Testing Your Starter's Capability Float Test Having Enough Starter for Your Formula Starter Variations Using Different Types of Flour What Does Hydration Mean? Taking Care of Your Starter Cleaning the Container and Revitalizing a Bad Starter Freezing your Starter Drying and Storing Your Starter Slowing Down Fermentation TIPS How to Make Motherdough @ 60% Hydration A Different Kind of Starter (cold fermented starter) 60% Motherdough Formula 40% Motherdough Formula 40% motherdough using 100% hydration starter 40% motherdough using 166% hydration starter: 50% Hydration Motherdough: Continue Your Sourdough Journey About the Author Resources

how to make a sourdough starter: Starter Sourdough Carroll Pellegrinelli, 2019-10-15 Easy sourdough starter—for flawless finished bread. For perfect sourdough bread, you need a healthy and happy starter—that yeasty concoction that gives sourdough its tangy, delicious flavor. Starter Sourdough helps you get the tricky starter process down pat, so you can have mouthwatering loaves, rolls, baguettes—and even cakes and cookies! This guide simplifies the process of making your own starter so it's accessible to anyone, no matter your skill level. Keep your tasty new creation alive and thriving with the help of clear instructions accompanied by beautiful photographs. Then try your hand at baking Perfect Italian Sourdough, Sourdough Marble Rye Bread, Double Piecrust, Sourdough Pretzels, Sourdough Cinnamon-Sugar Doughnuts, and more. Inside Starter Sourdough, you'll find: Great start—Master the secret to a good sourdough bread using this basic starter recipe: just flour, water, and a little attention. Creative variations—Craft whole grain breads, pizza dough, biscuits, and cake—there's a huge variety of recipes to explore, all from your starter. Nonstop starter—Sustain a hearty, long-lasting starter with a simple weekly feeding schedule, so it will repay you in baked goods for years to come. Put a unique twist on baked goods with Starter Sourdough!

how to make a sourdough starter: How to Make a Website Lori Culwell, 2023-11-11 So... you want a website. Maybe for your business. Maybe for your brilliant idea. Maybe just to finally get your cat the online fame he deserves. Whatever the reason, you googled how to make a website—and were instantly swallowed by a sea of jargon, conflicting advice, and people trying to sell you expensive nonsense you don't need. Let's fix that. This book walks you through building a real, working, good-looking website using WordPress—without making your eyes glaze over or requiring you to learn code, summon a developer, or sell your soul to Wix. With a heavy dose of humor and zero fluff, you'll learn exactly what to do, step by step, even if you're not "techy." You'll discover: --What you actually need to get started (spoiler: it's not as much as you think) --Simple plugins that make your site awesome --The fastest way to get online and look legit Whether you're starting a blog, launching a side hustle, or just want a place to rant about cupcakes, this is your no-BS guide to making a website—without losing your mind.

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to remove the fear from challenging recipes. It breaks down every technique into clear, manageable steps, so you can stop being intimidated and start creating amazing baked goods. This is more than a recipe collection; it is a skill-building resource. You will learn the fundamental techniques that professional bakers use. This handbook will build your confidence and help you move from basic home baking to creating truly impressive treats. Inside this complete guide, you will learn to make: Crusty, flavorful artisan breads, including sourdough. Flaky, multi-layered croissants and other classic pastries. Elegant European-style cakes, tortes, and tarts. A wide variety of beautiful and delicious bakeshop treats. Clear, step-by-step instructions with photos to guide you. This book is for any home baker who is ready to take the next step. You will learn how to create the impressive baked goods you have always dreamed of making. Start your artisan baking journey today. Scroll up and click the Buy Now button to get your copy.

how to make a sourdough starter: Fermenting Made Simple Emillie Parrish, 2022-05-31 Shortlisted for the 2023 Taste Canada Awards Winner of a Gourmand World Cookbook Award Looking to improve your gut health in a fun and flavourful way? This collection of 80+ recipes is a friendly, no-fuss primer on the joys of fermented foods. In this down-to-earth, no-fuss primer on fermented foods, Emillie Parrish introduces home cooks to deliciously easy DIY cultured foods and the principles of probiotics for health and well-being. Organized into chapters on fermented vegetables; nuts, seeds, and beans; grains; dairy; sourdough; and beverages (plus ideas for adding your ferments to snacks and meals) the book's 80+ recipes emphasize simplicity over specialized ingredients or equipment. The book is entirely vegetarian and includes a number of recipes specifically for gluten-free or vegan diets. From kimchi, pickles, and salsa to ginger bug, yogurt, and spreads, you'll soon have a kitchen full of tasty fermented foods. With beautiful photography, thorough guidelines on sanitizing, advice on mould (it's not all bad!), and best practices for storing your ferments for the short- and long-term, *Fermenting Made Simple* will teach you how to make affordable, no-cook and zero-waste pickles, condiments, snacks, and treats. All of your meals will burst with flavour!

how to make a sourdough starter: The Bread Exchange Malin Elmlid, 2014-10-07 One blogger's story of her hunger for greater meaning in life and its enrichment through sharing handmade bread, plus fifty delicious recipes you can try. From her cozy kitchen in Berlin to a flat in London, from a deck in New York City to huddling around a tandoor in Kabul, the author shares discoveries, stories, and recipes from her inspiring travels. A busy fashion-industry professional with a bread-baking obsession, Malin Elmlid started offering her loaves to others in return for recipes, handmade goods, and, above all, special experiences that come from giving generously of yourself. Here is a book of tales and reflections, of wanderlust connections, and more than fifty recipes for Malin's naturally leavened breads and other delicious things collected on a journey honoring the staff and the stuff of life.

how to make a sourdough starter: A Sour Piece of Baking History Gio Angelo, 2018-12-19 Simplest of Recipes for Making Sourdough (or Sour Dough) Sourdough is a great thing to cook with. It can really make any meal taste great, and if you want to make your bread products taste good then this is perfect for you. Sourdough is an important thing that you can use to make any meal better. Plus, sourdough bread has a unique taste to it that's different from everything else. You'll love the way this tastes when you try it, and having a sourdough bread product for your dish is definitely worth eating. You might want to try this out, but you have no clue how to go about it. There is a lot you can do about this, and you can try out various things in order to make it. But you don't want to waste your time with starters and recipes that might not work. You want something that is tried and true, and in this book, you'll find the best sourdough starters to make the best sourdough that you can have. You might have the question of what in the world is a sourdough starter. Well that will be answered here. A sourdough starter is the first thing you do in order to create sourdough. It's the first step and the pre-ferment stage of making the bread. What this does is it produces a leaven that helps to make the flavor of the bread. There is a lot out there that you can try, and there are many flavors to choose from. It's an interesting process, and it's the first

crucial step to help make the dough rise and make the yeast better for baking. You also want to have this right because it helps make a better finished product instead of one with weaker gluten and not as dense. A sourdough starter is easy to do, and you will want to try this. You might wonder why sourdough out of all the breads, but that's another question you can get answered. Simply put, sourdough bread tastes different than most breads. It also can be used with baking soda and even some types of flapjacks were made like this. Another very popular one that's well-known is the common open-faced sandwiches that are famous in Denmark. Even the tasty Amish friendship bread comes in this way, and you can try them all out using different starters. It's fun to do and you can make many different goodies. In this book, you will get 15 different recipes on how to make your own sourdough starter. They're all different and you can try them out. They have a unique taste to each of them, and you will surely want to see what you can make with this. Don't hesitate to try out new things with each one, for these recipes will help you expand your knowledge of how to make tasty sourdough bread and is one of the crucial steps to making it taste better than anything you've ever imagined. Would You Like To Know More About Creating Fresh Amazingly Tasty Sourdough Bread in the Comfort of Your Home Kitchen? Download now and begin your online business TODAY! Scroll to the top of the page and hit the buy button.

how to make a sourdough starter: Learn to make natural cheeses Using traditional methods with raw ingredients to make delicious cheeses , 2024-02-17 Introduction

Cheesemaking, as practiced in North America, is decidedly unnatural. Is there an approach to the art that's not dependent on packaged mesophilic starter cultures, freeze-dried fungal spores, microbial rennet, and calcium chloride? Do cheesemakers really need pH meters, plastic cheese forms, and sanitizing solutions? Are modern technologies the only path to good cheese? What of traditional methodologies? Did cheesemakers make consistently good cheese prior to pasteurization? Did cheeses fail if they weren't made in stainless-steel vats with pure strains of Lactobacilli and triple-washed surfaces? Where are the guidebooks that teach traditional methods? Have our ancestors' cheesemaking practices been lost to the forces of progress and commercialization? I believe that the quality and taste of cheese have declined dramatically as traditional methods have been abandoned. And that the idea—propagated by the industrial cheesemaking paradigm—that traditional ways of making cheese, with raw milk and mother cultures, make for inconsistent and poor-quality cheese is a myth. For there is wisdom in the traditional practices of cheesemakers . . . Generations upon generations of traditional cheesemakers evolved the diverse methods of making cheese while carefully practicing their art. All classes of cheese were discovered by cheesemakers long before they had a scientific understanding of the microbiological and chemical forces at play in its creation. Industry and science hijacked cheesemaking from the artisans and farmers some 150 years ago, and since then few new styles of cheese have been created; yet during that time hundreds, possibly thousands, of unique cheeses have been lost. Standard methods of cheesemaking—reliant on pasteurization, freeze-dried starters, and synthetic rennets that interfere with the ecology of cheese—are equivalent to standard practices in industrial agriculture, such as the use of hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides that have overtaken traditional agriculture, and conflict with the ecology of the land. Cheese comes from the land and is one of our most celebrated foods; yet its current production methods are environmentally destructive, corporately controlled, and chemically dependent. In its eating we're not celebrating the traditions of agriculture but rather pasteurization, stainless-steel production, biotechnology, and corporate culture. If we gave its methods of production some thought, we wouldn't want to eat the stuff! It strikes me as absurd that there is no commonly practiced natural cheesemaking in North America. Farmers practice ecologically inspired agriculture; brewers are making beers and wines with only wild yeasts; bakers are raising breads with heirloom sourdough starters; and sauerkraut makers are fermenting their krauts with only the indigenous cultures of the cabbage. But cheesemakers are stuck in a haze of food technology, pasteurization, and freeze-dried commercial cultures, and no one even questions the standard approach. Other cheesemaking guidebooks insist that home cheesemakers adopt the industrial approach to cheese along with its

tools and additives. Their advice is based on standards put in place to make industrial production more efficient, and a mass-produced product safer. But for small-scale or home-scale cheesemaking, a different approach can work. A Different Approach From the making of my very first Camembert, I knew there had to be a better way than the cheesemaking methods preached by the go-to guidebooks. I just couldn't bring myself to buy a package of freeze-dried fungus, and my search for alternatives to commonly used cheese additives led to a series of discoveries—about the origins of culture, about the beauty of raw milk, and about the nature of cheese—that set in place the philosophies of this guidebook. Not being one to blindly follow the standard path, I set out to teach myself a traditional approach to cheesemaking. The methods I share in this book are the result of 10 years of my own experimentations and creative inquiry with milk: years of trial and error in my kitchen, rediscovering, one by one, a natural approach to making every style of cheese. I now practice a cheesemaking inspired by the principles of ecology, biodynamics, and organic farming; it is a cheesemaking that's influenced by traditional methods of fermentation through which I preserve all my other foods; and a cheesemaking that's not in conflict with the simple and noncommercial manner in which I live my life. I now work with nature, rather than against nature, to make cheese. When I teach my methods to students, there is not a single book that I can recommend that explores a natural cheese philosophy, and no website to browse but my own. It is this absence of information in print and online that led me to write this book. I never thought that I'd be an author, but I felt compelled to provide a compilation of methods for making cheese differently. For it's about time for a book to lay the framework for a hands-on, natural, and traditional approach to cheese. The techniques presented in this book work. And the photographs within, featuring cheeses made by these methods, are the only proof I can offer. I wish I could share my cheeses with you so that you could taste how delicious a more naturally made cheese can be, but unfortunately I cannot sell the cheeses I make because raw milk and food safety regulations restrict me from selling cheeses made in the small-scale and traditional manner that I practice. If small-scale and traditional practices are constrained by regulations controlling cheese production and access to raw milk, perhaps it is time to question the authority of these standards. We need a more radical cheesemaking, a more natural approach to the medium of milk. But it's surprising that it's come to me to lay this foundation; for who am I, but a small farmer and a humble cheesemaker . . .

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