



**HOW TO BAKE ARTISAN BREAD with RAISIN-DATE YEAST WATER**  
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Yeast Water is an age-old practice of allowing live yeast to ferment in water. Yeast Water replaces active dry yeast and sourdough starter in long-rise bread baking. Here's my 1-2-3 for making and using Yeast Water (YW).



QUART JAR + LID



80gr. RAISINS OR DATES



500gr/ml. WATER (100°F)

1. Pour the water into jar and add fruit. Close with double or single lid\*.  
(\*the double lid could be a safety for releasing built up fermentation; a plastic lid leaks less when shaking)
2. Leave at room temperature, at least 75°F, a warm place up to 80°F. Every day, 2 times a day, quickly open and close ("burp") the jar to release gases, shake vigorously over the sink, and burp again. The water will become a little cloudy.
3. Leave the yeast water covered at room temperature, shaking and burping daily, until the water is fizzy when shaken and all the fruit is floating, 5 to 6 days.  
Keep YW in the refrigerator. YW is always ready for baking, no advance feeding required.

If room temperature is below about 65°F, YW may take a few days longer to ferment. Ideal fermentation temperature is 77-80°F. Temperatures above 90°F can run risk of spoiling. Fermentation temperature can be managed by leaving the jar in the oven with the light on, checking temperature so as not to heat oven above 85-90°F. (Take care not to turn on the oven!)

### DARK RAISINS + DATES



Day 1



Day 5 done

### GOLDEN RAISINS (sulfured raisins may be more difficult to ferment)



Day 2



Day 5 bubbles on top



Yeast settlement

### **SIGNS TO WATCH FOR AS FERMENTATION DEVELOPS:**

- Fruit floating to the top with tiny bubbles forming around the fruit and on top.
- An air release pop when opening the jar after shaking.
- Yeasty alcoholic smell like kombucha or beer, with a little sharp sensation on the nose.
- If after 3 days there is no change in the water and fruit is not floating, add 20 grams sugar. Continue with the fermentation process.
- If mold forms around fruit, discard the batch and start over.

## BAKING WITH YEAST WATER

When the YW is fermented, refrigerate with the fruit in the jar and start baking! When about 3/4 of the water has been used (or about ¾ cup water left in the jar), strain or scoop out the fruit and follow directions for maintaining YW.

Replace up to 50% of the water called for in a bread recipe with yeast water. I usually bake breads with about 25% YW. Using more YW can slightly speed proof time, but a higher ratio of YW can also add a slight flavor. Although there is no discernible flavor difference in baked breads between natural raisin, golden raisin, or date YW, each YW has a slightly different aroma. All should smell yeasty/slightly alcoholic when freshly made, and retain the aroma when refrigerated.

Yeast Water can be used in my [No-Knead Artisan Bread recipe](#), adapted from the [NYTimes recipe](#), (may have paywall) originally by Jim Lahey. Simply replace the dry yeast with 100g of **YW in the total water amount called for in the recipe**.

I often bake breads from Ken Forkish' book [Flour Water Salt Yeast](#). I replace the dry yeast, with 150g of **YW from the total amount of water in the recipe**. There are multiple [YouTube videos](#) on Ken's Artisan method, which takes just a little more effort to make than the No-Knead bread.

## MAINTAINING YEAST WATER

When the quart-size jar is about 1/4-1/3 full (about 150g YW, or 2/3 cup), or after 3-4 batches of bread, it's time to replenish as follows:

- 1) Remove the raisins or dates and discard or save; **keep the YW in the jar**. [The fermented dates keep nearly indefinitely in the refrigerator, so I sometimes mash them into banana bread or muffins. There isn't much flavor but it adds moisture and a little sugar, and prevents waste].
- 2) Add water to the shoulder of the jar, which is about 500g water (2 cups), add 30g (2 Tbsp) granulated sugar, 2 dried dates (Medjool) and scant ½ tsp Kosher salt (or ¼ tsp table salt). Salt modulates fermentation which could prevent explosion, and may reduce chance of mold that could occur while the sugary mixture is feeding on the yeast.
- 3) Cover the jar with lid, shake to dissolve and disperse sugar and salt. Burp to release air gases.
- 4) Leave the jar closed at room temperature 2-3 days. This fermentation is less sensitive to temperature so I leave on the kitchen counter which is usually around 62-70°F. Once a day remove lid to release gases and let fresh air in, then tighten lid and shake jar to mix well. If a day is skipped it will be ok but the fermentation gases could build up, so for safety it's best to open and release every day. An active water may look done in a day, but I wait 72 hours before refrigerating.
- 5) After 2-3 days the water will be more fizzy when shaken, and have the yeasty/slightly alcoholic aroma. Now it is ready again! Keep refrigerated until use. Measure YW as part of the recipe liquid. Heat it up to 90-95°F if recipe calls for warmed liquid.

**COMPARISON of SOURDOUGH STARTER vs. YEAST WATER vs. DRY YEAST  
in long-rise hand-crafted ARTISAN BREAD**

<b>Sourdough Starter</b>	Requires maintenance feeding & discard. Produces desired sour fermentation flavor.
<b>Yeast Water</b>	Ready-to-use from refrigerator. Allows long fermentation and complex flavor development.
<b>Dry Yeast</b>	Convenient and fast proofing. May add a detectable yeast flavor.

<b>Bread Bake Method</b>	<b>Flavor</b>	<b>Texture</b>	<b>Proof time – long rise</b>	<b>Starter maintenance</b>
<b>Sourdough Starter</b>	Distinct sour flavor, variable in sourness by the strain and fermentation level of the starter.	Crusty. Crispness of crust varies by bake method*	First proof- Usually 12hrs. Final proof- Variable from 2-4hrs **	Weekly: Discard portion of starter and add fresh flour and water
<b>Yeast Water</b> Artisan Style Bread <b>poolish method</b> To use YW, omit yeast and replace 150 g of the total water with yeast water  This is a two-step process which uses an overnight preferment called poolish, explained by Ken Forkish, <a href="#">Flour Water</a> <a href="#">Salt Yeast</a>	Instead of a ‘sourdough’ flavor, long-rise YW bread produces a complex grain flavor. This flavor varies by type of flours used, such as rye, spelt, whole wheats. (There may be exception to YW flavor with some fruit waters such as apple or other fruit YW which I have not tested).	Firm-crisp crust when fresh. Soft moist interior. Crispness of crust varies by bake method*. Keeps well at least 3 days.	Preferment proof time of 12-24hrs, Final proof – Variable from 8-18hrs **	YW is ready to use from refrig. To rebuild YW, replace water that’s been used and add, dried dates, sugar, salt. Stand room temp 72hrs. Refrig again. It’s ready to use and <b>Zero waste!</b>
<b>Yeast Water vs. active dry yeast in NO-Knead method</b>  To use YW, omit yeast and replace 100-150g of the water with yeast water No Knead Bread instructions <a href="#">click here</a>	No-Knead with dry yeast vs. YW may rise about 25% faster but no discernible difference in finished flavor or texture.  This bread has less complex flavor than poolish method or sourdough.	Crusty but usually less crisp than recipes with preferment**. Crumb is sometimes moist/damp but very acceptable for fresh bread. Enjoy this loaf pronto!	18-24 hrs with no hands-on until dough appx doubles. Shape then bake within 1 hour after doubled.	Same as above for Yeast Water

\*Cast iron pot is recommended in preheated or cold oven. Increase bake time 15-20 min if starting with cold oven.

\*\*Ambient temperature between 65-75F makes significant difference in rise time. Ideal is 65-70F.

**Preferment** is a small portion of YW and flour allowed to rise for 12-24 hours, then added to the final dough.

## YEAST WATER BREAD BAKING TIPS:

The amount of YW in a batch of bread dough does not have to be exact. As little as 10% works as long as there is a rise time of at least 12 hours or up to 24 hours, which varies by room temperature. You'll be tempted to use 50% or more yeast water, but it is not necessary. 10-30% YW is adequate. Plus, you need to save some of the water to replenish for future use. YW does work!

For more information on Wild Yeast Water:

Join the [Facebook page, "Artisan Bread Baking with Wild Yeast Water"](#).

YouTube video the PPG Baker, ["PablosWildYeastWater"](#).

These crusty loaves have flavor and texture variations. All are delicious!

**King Arthur sourdough method**



**Ken Forkish' Poolish Method with Natural Raisin YW**



**No-Knead method with Raisin YW**

