



Chapman Public Library

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NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Gold Rush and Sourdough

Sourdough has one of the longest histories of any food we still eat today. Its story is closely tied to the rise of agriculture and early civilizations. In more recent times, sourdough helped to feed the miners during the California Gold Rush (1840s-1850s). Miners relied on this staple for dependable bread in remote places.

January 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill. Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to California. Mining camps were

isolated, with food resources scarce. Commercial yeast was unavailable or spoiled. Flour traveled well-and sourdough only needed flour, water, and time.

Miners learned to keep a sourdough starter alive as their personal leavening source. The workers cared for their starters by storing them in crocks, tins or sack cloths. To keep the bread starter alive, miners would sleep and carry it inside their clothing to keep it from freezing. Finally,

sharing or stealing a starter could cause serious disputes.

The miners were nicknamed the '49ers' for the year of rushing to California. Another lesser known nickname they received was, 'sourdoughs'. The term originally described someone experienced and resourceful.

Today, sourdough has made resurgence in society. This tangy and chewy bread echoes the sustainability and reliability cultures and civilizations had before us.

Make Your Own Starter!

Why Try Sourdough?

Sourdough baking is both practical and rewarding. With simple ingredients and easy ratios, sourdough is accessible to anyone.

Sourdough Starter

To make an easy sourdough starter, mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour (all-purpose or whole wheat) with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup room-temperature water in a jar until it forms a thick, pancake-batter consistency, cover loosely, and let it sit at room temperature for 24 hours. On day two, stir in another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, even if you don't see bubbles yet. On day three and each day after, discard half of the starter and feed it again with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, stirring well and loosely covering the jar. Over the next several

days, the starter will begin to bubble, smell pleasantly sour, and rise and fall between feedings; this is normal and means natural yeast is developing. By about day seven, your starter should double in size within 4-6 hours of feeding and have a tangy, fresh smell, which means it's ready to use for baking. Once established, the starter can be kept on the counter and fed daily or stored in the refrigerator and fed about once a week.

February @ the Library

What can you discover at
your library in February?

- Story Time every Thursday morning at 10:15 AM.
- Art & Audio 4 PM-5 PM on Wednesdays.
- Evening Story Time- Tues. Feb. 17th @ 5 PM
- Guess the Library 2025 totals for a chance to win a copy of the book, 'The Scout and the Skinwalker'.
- Feb. 3rd- Reader's Hangout for adults
- Sweet Treat End Cap- Browse older works and discover a new sweet treat novel!



Reader's Hangout

Adults, join us for an adult book club at the library. A new take on book club.

- Bring your own book
- Discuss your book
- Spend time reading
- Meet other local readers!

Date: Tuesday, February 3rd

Time: 2:00 PM-3:00 PM

Meet us at the Chapman
Public Library!

Guess the 2025 Numbers

The Library invites patrons to guess the 2025 totals in three categories for a chance to win a copy of 'The Scout and the Skinwalker,' a Western novel about a former army scout and a priest facing an unknown attacker. Guesses can be submitted from February 1st to 12th, with winners announced on February 13th.

Three categories: number of patron visits, number of check outs, and number of books borrowed on Libby.