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Fluffy Sourdough Discard Pancakes (Almost No Added Flour!)

By Kimberly Hart · May 28, 2025 · Jun 9, 2025

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I set out to achieve a seemingly impossible task: make fluffy sourdough pancakes entirely out of discard (no flour!).

While I didn't fully succeed, I got pretty dang close. And these pancakes taste SO GOOD. Oh my gosh.

Like the waffles, they are a total of sourdough discard. Plus, **you only need a small bit of fresh flour** in the batter, so most of it is naturally fermented and gut-healthy.

The Pancake Recipe Testing Journey

What makes my waffle recipe special is that all the flour comes from your sourdough discard—no additional flour needed. It's **completely pre-fermented**, making it both delicious and easier to digest.

I was **determined to create a pancake version** that maintained this unique quality.

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When a few followers suggested simply adding baking powder to the waffle batter, I was optimistic. I tried it and... disappointment. The pancakes came out thin and floppy—more like crêpes than the fluffy stacks we all crave.

Watch my recipe testing:

Test 1: The Egg White Method

My research led me to the classic technique of separating eggs and **beating the whites to stiff peaks**. This works wonders for regular pancakes, so why not sourdough?

I meticulously separated the eggs, whipped those white until they stood tall, and gently folded them into my discard batter with a touch of leavening.

The result? Better than my first try, but still thin and flat.

Test 2: Kitchen Chemistry

For my next trial, I went all-in on the science. I significantly **increased the leavening agents**, added **sour cream** for acidity and structure, and even incorporated **sparkling water** for instant bubbles.

The process was becoming quite involved—separate this, fold that, work quickly before the bubbles disappear... even if it turned out good, I wasn't like the direction we were heading in.

The pancakes were lighter but still not what I'd proudly call fluffy. And the recipe was just too complicated for a relaxed weekend breakfast.

Test 3: The Breakthrough

After all of these attempts, I had to confront a hard truth: **perhaps some fresh flour was necessary**.

It felt like admitting defeat after trying to modify my "no added flour" waffle recipe. But pancakes and waffles are fundamentally different beasts.

Waffles get their structure from the iron that traps steam and creates a crisp exterior. But **pancakes need to rise on their own** as a flat surface. They need more structural support.

My third test added just a small amount of fresh flour, simplified the process (goodbye, egg separation), and found the sweet spot with leavening.

And finally—**success!** Fluffy, tender pancakes that still primarily use your sourdough discard. And the flavor is SO good!

Using Discard vs Active Starter

You can use either sourdough discard or active starter in this fluffy sourdough discard pancakes recipe.

While these pancakes would actually taste best with active sourdough starter, this recipe is specifically designed to help you use up extra sourdough discard from your fridge.

A few important notes:

- Try to use discard that's 10 days old or less, as older discard can develop softer flavors over time (it's fine based on my tests, it's not going to taste good).
- The real benefit of sourdough discard recipes is **you're using pre-fermented flour**.
- That's why I try to add as little fresh flour as possible to the batter—so you really do get some nice health benefits from the fermented recipe.

This approach maximizes the nutritional advantages of pre-fermented flour while putting your excess discard to good use.

How to Make These Fast Sourdough Discard Pancakes

This pancake batter comes together in about 3 minutes—no waiting required.

Since we're using mostly discard, you get the benefits of pre-fermented flour without any extra steps. If you're looking for an easy recipe that delivers a quick, delicious breakfast, this is the one!

Step 1: Mix the Ingredients

The first step is actually preheating your pan over medium-low heat. I like to preheat my pancakes cast iron skillet for 10-15 minutes. A regular cast iron skillet, nonstick pan, or griddle works great, too.

I'm a bit of a rebel and like to use everything in one large bowl, but with this pancake recipe, you really need to keep the dry and wet ingredients in separate bowls.

Pancake batter looks so best when you don't overmix it. In fact, leaving small bits of dry flour in the batter is recommended.

However, a pocket of baking soda that isn't incorporated with the rest of the ingredients is super bitter and gross. We want to whisk the baking soda (and powder) into the flour well so it's very dispersed.

When your pan is fully preheated, gently fold the dry ingredients into the wet, leaving some pockets of dry flour.

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Depending on how thin or thick your batter is, add about 50g of sparkling water and gently fold that in until the batter is smooth.

The consistency is key here, so don't be afraid to veer away from my measurements. If your discard is super runny, your batter will naturally be thinner, and vice versa.

This photo shows the final batter texture we're after:

Step 2: Cook the Pancakes

Next up, we cook the pancakes.

Add about 1.5 tbsp butter to the preheated skillet. You could also spritz it with your favorite cooking oil. I like to lightly oil my measuring cup for easier scooping and pouring, but that part is optional.

Use a 1½ cup measuring cup to measure out 3-4 pancakes per batch (depending on how many fit in your pan).

Don't flip until the bottom has set and the top is covered in bubbles (about 3-4 minutes). Cook the other side until golden brown, about 1 minute more.

Welcome!
Hey, I'm Rebekah, baker known as that sourdough gal. I've turned home bakers into pro sourdough with easy recipes & science-backed tips. My hope is you will learn from my successes and mistakes, having a lot of fun along the way!
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Serve warm with your favorite toppings!

How to Store Sourdough Discard Pancakes

Pancakes are prime time for freezing.

1. Place cooled pancakes on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
2. Freeze for 1-2 hours, uncovered.
3. Transfer to a freezer-safe bag for long-term storage.

They can last for months in the freezer.

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From frozen, just it in a toaster oven on a low setting (ie 2 out of 5 on our dial). It tastes like you just cooked it up!

Ingredient Substitutions

- **Sourdough discard:** you can use active starter in this recipe if it's more convenient (1:1 also tasty a little better)
- **Melted butter:** you can swap the melted butter for melted coconut oil or avocado oil.
- **Sugar:** use whatever sweetener you prefer (Maple syrup or honey work well here)
- **Cinnamon:** like the warmth and flavor the cinnamon adds, but it's optional and can be substituted for any other flavor or spice you like. Nutmeg, Allspice, Pumpkin Pie Spice, Clove, Ginger, or Cardamom could be fun to try!

FAQs

- **Can I use milk instead of sparkling water in this the batter?**
- **How many pancakes does this recipe make?**
- **Does the discard need to come to room temperature first?**
- **I thought you couldn't use sourdough discard until it was over 10 days old?**
- **Can you mix different days of discard together?**
- **Do you have to change the recipe if you add add-ins like blueberries or chocolate chips?**
- **How do you serve these sourdough pancakes?**
- **Are these pancakes vegan?**

Related: 27 Best Sourdough Discard Breakfast Recipe Ideas

Sourdough Discard Pancakes

COOKING ★★★★★ 1 reviews

Fluffy on the outside, chewy on the inside, and bursting with tangy sourdough flavor, these pancakes are the perfect way to use up sourdough discard. They're quick, easy, and freezer-friendly!

★★★★★ 4.8 from 9 votes

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PREP TIME	COOK TIME	TOTAL TIME
5 mins	25 mins	30 mins

INGREDIENTS US | Metric

- 56 g melted butter (4 tbsp)
- 60 g yogurt cream (2 tbsp) (or Greek yogurt)
- 2 eggs (about 100g)
- 454 g sourdough discard (or active starter)
- 6 g salt (about 1 tsp)
- 100 g sugar (or honey, maple syrup)
- 500 g all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon (optional)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 180 g sparkling water
- 2 tbsp butter (for greasing the skillet)

INSTRUCTIONS US | Metric

1. Heat a skillet or griddle over medium-low heat. (Cast iron or enameled cast iron works best.)

2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together **56 g melted butter**, **60 g sour cream**, **2 eggs**, **300 g sourdough discard**, **6 g vanilla extract**, and **100 g sugar** until smooth.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together **500 g all-purpose flour**, **1 tsp cinnamon**, **10 tsp salt**, **2 tsp baking powder**, and **2 tsp baking soda**. Pour the wet batter just until combined. Small lumps of flour are good—do not over-mix!
4. Add **180 g sparkling water** (or milk) and gently mix until incorporated. The batter should slowly fall off a spoon. Adjust liquid as needed depending on your discard's consistency.

5. Add 1/2 tbsp butter to the preheated skillet. Using a lightly oiled 1/4 cup measuring cup, scoop batter onto skillet, cooking 3-4 pancakes per batch.
6. Flip when the bottom has set and the top is covered in bubbles (about 3-4 minutes). Cook the other side until golden brown, about 1 minute more.

7. Repeat with remaining batter, adding butter to the skillet as needed. Serve warm with your favorite toppings.

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NOTES

- **Freezing tip:** Freeze cooked pancakes in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Then transfer to a freezer-safe bag for storage. Reheat straight from frozen in a toaster oven for best results.
- **Flavor variations:** Add chocolate chips, blueberries, or other mix-ins to the batter just before cooking.
- **Fruitiness matters:** For best flavor, use discard that's less than 10 days old. Older discard works too, but tastes tangier.
- **Adjust the heat:** If pancakes are browning too quickly or not cooking through, adjust the skillet temperature as needed. Medium-low heat works best for even cooking.
- **Batch cooking:** Keep cooked pancakes warm by placing them in a 200°F (93°C) oven until ready to serve.

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Conclusion

Just like the waffles, these fluffy pancakes featuring sourdough discard are a family favorite (especially on a lazy Saturday morning), and for good reason.

They're quick to make, use up tons of sourdough discard, and freeze perfectly for busy mornings.

If you fix this recipe, let me know in the comments how it went. I sincerely hope they're the best sourdough pancakes you've ever made!

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25 Comments

Jenny Meier says:
May 30, 2020 at 2:04 am

So amazing! My babies said the best sourdough pancakes yet and I have tested many many recipes! I love that you tried to use the least amount of flour possible! I set you could sub in oil Nationwd sub for the flour! Just a thought 😉

Reply

Rebekah Parr says:
June 2, 2020 at 9:47 am

Awe yay I'm so happy the babies loved them!

Reply

Holly says:
June 2, 2020 at 5:15 pm

The Best Sourdough Pancakes!
Thank you for this recipe, I finally have one that I'm completely in love with!
I've tried many, but not quite right. I had to use lime sparkling water, because that's what I had on hand, and also used maple syrup, and sprinkled chocolate chips, and caramel chips on top before cooking.
All I can say is, they were the best I've ever had, and my husband said the same thing! Love all your recipes!
A

Reply

Rebekah Parr says:
June 2, 2020 at 9:48 am

Caramel chips on top sounds so yummy! So glad you loved them!

Reply

Tammy says:
June 2, 2025 at 10:29 pm

Reply

Oh my!!! We just made this recipe for dinner tonight and I will never use any other pancake recipe, other than this one, ever again!! You knocked it outta the park with putting it together Rebekah and making THE BEST discard recipe for pancakes!! My husband said "was it hard to make?" And I said "no, why?" And he said "cuz these are the best pancakes ever!" And I wholeheartedly agree!! They are truly fluffy and absolutely delicious!!

Danielle says:
June 5, 2025 at 6:19 pm

Reply

These turned out great! The only thing I'd alter next time is maybe another 10g or so of sugar. I have a picky kiddo who dislikes syrup (I know, what?!) so a slightly sweeter pancake benefits her.

Rebekah Parr says:
June 9, 2025 at 1:20 pm

Reply

So happy you loved them!!

Alice says:
June 6, 2025 at 4:24 pm

Reply

The pancakes turned out light and fluffy, as well as delicious! Thanks for all your hard work getting this recipe perfected!

Rebekah Parr says:
June 9, 2025 at 1:20 pm

Reply

Yay! I'm so happy you loved them!

Martha says:
June 8, 2025 at 2:38 pm

Reply

Hey TSG, I always print your recipes because they are so great. I was wondering if there was a way you could make it possible to print this one without all the images because it makes it so long and takes so much ink? Right now, it's only possible to print without the initial image. Thank you!

Rebekah Parr says:
June 10, 2025 at 5:32 pm

Reply

Hey, you should be able to just uncheck the box that says "Instruction Images." The team that designed my website was making some changes to the recipe card so it very well may not have been there when you tried the other day. But can you try again?

Christopher says:
June 8, 2025 at 3:10 pm

Reply

Tried these this morning and they were so good. Probably my new favorite recipe for pancakes. Loving them

Rebekah Parr says:
June 9, 2025 at 1:23 pm

Reply

Yay, so happy you're loving them!

Frank says:
June 11, 2025 at 3:34 pm

Reply

Hi Rebecca
Txs for putting this recipe together.
I made a change to it, just for the sake of lowering the carbs a little bit. I used almond flour instead and protein powder.
Yum!

Rebekah Parr says:
June 13, 2025 at 2:05 pm

Reply

Yay, so glad you love them!!

Dawn Bright says:
June 24, 2025 at 1:04 pm

Reply

Ummm I've made a lot of pancakes in my life and this recipe is by far my absolute favorite!

Rebekah Parr says:
June 24, 2025 at 2:04 pm

Reply

So glad to hear that!!

Reagan says:
July 4, 2025 at 1:27 pm

Reply

Love this recipe! I've tried other discard(and active) pancake recipes and this is by far my favorite recipe. Light, great taste, easy to follow, and my boys devoured it!

Rebekah Parr says:
July 5, 2025 at 5:02 pm

Reply

Woohoo!!

Christine Hood says:
July 18, 2025 at 8:01 pm

Reply

We have a cabin in Alaska and we get a few visitors over the summer that come to hang out and fish. I have tried this pancake recipe on them this summer in several groups and the review is "great pancakes". So thank you for the tried and true recipe.

Rebekah Parr says:
July 18, 2025 at 9:15 pm

Reply

So glad to hear it!!

Charlee says:
August 2, 2025 at 5:10 pm

Reply

This recipe is amazing! It was sweet enough ALMOST to not have to use syrup. My stepson loved it – he said this recipe is a keeper!

Rebekah Parr says:
August 3, 2025 at 11:13 pm

Reply

So glad!!

Donna DeMotte says:
August 13, 2025 at 6:55 pm

Reply

This is the best tasting, even when not hot, recipe I have ever tried. There's so much ooomph to these pancakes. And altho usually I kinda drench my pancakes with syrup, I don't even use it anymore, bc the flavor of the pancakes is satisfying–now I just a use a small amount of jam or fruit.

Rebekah Parr says:
August 14, 2025 at 5:45 pm

Reply

I love to hear that Donna, thanks for sharing!!

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