

Focaccia Bread

written by The Recipe Exchange | August 3, 2016

Ingredients

For the biga starter:

1/2 cup all purpose flour

1/3 cup warm water (110 F)

1/4 teaspoon instant or active dry yeast

For the dough:

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour + extra for dusting your work surface

1 1/4 cups warm water (110 F)

1 teaspoon instant or active dry yeast

few tablespoons of olive oil

2 teaspoons salt

fresh or dried herbs of choice for sprinkling on top

Directions

To make the biga, combine:

1/2 cup all purpose flour

1/3 cup warm water (110 F)

1/4 teaspoon instant or active dry yeast

Stir these ingredients together in a medium sized bowl until they're nice and smooth and no dry lumps remain. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature for 8-24 hours.

In a large bowl, combine your biga mixture, 2 1/2 cups all purpose flour, 1 teaspoon yeast, and 1 1/4 cups warm water (110 F). Stir until no dry spots remain and cover with plastic wrap. Let sit for 15 minutes. Sprinkle over 2 teaspoons of salt and then mix the dough well for a minute or so until the salt is incorporated. Cover the bowl again with plastic wrap and let sit for 30 minutes to rise at room temperature.

After the initial rise you just finished, you'll begin folding and then rising the dough in 30 minute windows. This is taking the place of kneading.

Spray a spatula with cooking spray and use it to fold a small amount of the dough on the sides over into the center. You will do this eight times, turning the bowl as you go, until the dough has been entirely folded over on itself. Now cover with the plastic wrap let it rise for 30 minutes.

Repeat the folding and rising process two more times. During the last rise, place a baking stone or an upside down baking sheet in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 500 F.

Flour your counter lightly and transfer the dough to it. Flour the top of the dough lightly as well. Divide the dough in half. Add 1-2 tablespoons of oil to your pans and rub it around with your hands until the bottom and lower

sides are well covered.

Shape the dough halves into small rounds by tucking the sides of the top under. Place them into the pans top side down and swirl them around until they're well coated and then flip them over so the bottom is down and swirl that around as well. This will coat both sides of the dough with oil.

Let the dough rest in the pans for 5 minutes – the dough will spread out as it rests. Press the dough down into the pan using your fingers. Make sure it's flattening out and reaching all sides of the pan. If you're having issues getting it to stretch, let it rest for 5-10 minutes and try again.

Once the dough has taken on the shape of the pan, use a fork to prick the dough all over. Pop any large air bubbles you see! Now you'll sprinkle the dough with whatever herbs you'd like. Once that's done, let the dough rise a little and get some small bubbles. This will take 5-10 minutes.

Place the cake pans on top of the baking stone or upside down baking sheet and turn the oven down to 450 F. Bake until the bread is golden brown on top, 25-30 minutes.

Once the bread is done, remove it from the oven and let it cool on racks in the pans for 5 minutes. Then remove the bread from the pans and let them continue to cool on the racks for about 30 minutes. (If you have any extra oil in the bottoms of the pans, brush it over the top!)

This bread can be stored wrapped in plastic wrap for a couple days.