



Foccacia

Serves 12

Prep time: 20 mins plus 1 hour 15 minutes resting

Cook time: 25-30 minutes

Freeze: yes

This is simple bread to make. It doesn't require hours of tedious kneading and it is well worth making a big batch as it freezes so well.

1 kilo (2lb 4oz) organic unbleached strong bread flour
2 teaspoons easy-blend dried yeast
a dessertspoon caster sugar
a dessertspoon salt
about 75ml (3 floz) good quality olive oil
few small sprigs of fresh rosemary or thyme, chopped
Sea salt (preferably Maldon), for sprinkling

You will also need a large (40 x 30 cm/16 12 in) baking tray, lightly oiled

Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl and stir in the yeast, sugar and salt. Make a well in the centre of the flour and add 725 mls (1 1/4 pints) of warm (not hot) water. Start to mix everything together with a whisk and then use your hands to bring the dough together.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work surface and knead it for about 5 minutes, which will activate the dough. When ready, it will be springy and elastic to the touch.

Transfer the dough back to the (cleaned) mixing bowl, dribble 55ml (2 floz) of olive oil over the surface. Cover with cling film (lightly oil the clingfilm on the side that will be facing the dough), and leave in a warm place for about 45 minutes - 1 hour, or until the dough has doubled in size.

With oiled hands gently punch the air out of the dough, knead it briefly again to make sure the olive oil is incorporated and then form the dough into a smooth ball. Put the ball on the baking tray and gently press down on the dough and pull it out towards the edges of the tray, until it is about 1 cm

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(1/2 inch) thick.

Preheat the oven to 200c 400f gas mark 6. Using your finger tips, push into the dough surface to create a dimpled effect, dribble about 25 ml (1 floz) of olive oil over the top and sprinkle with the chopped fresh rosemary or thyme. Leave the dough to rest in a warm place for 15 minutes, then sprinkle sea salt all over the top and bake for 25 - 30 minutes or until the bread is risen and golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.