

Focaccia

Italian Flatbread

This Italian flat bread is a great companion to any meal. It's easy to make and the dough is quite forgiving. From this basic recipe, you can add a variety of herbs or toppings. Serve it with a saucer of olive oil mixed with salt and pepper or a bowl of sauce for dipping. It is my favorite recipe for pizza crust. The recipe can be doubled easily to make a larger loaf.

Ingredients

cornmeal (optional)

1 tsp sugar

1 1/2 tsp quick-rising yeast

3/4 cup warm water (about 105–115 degrees or the temperature of a baby bottle)

1 cup brown rice flour

1/4 cup tapioca flour

1/4 cup potato starch

2 tsp xanthan gum

3/4 tsp salt

3 TBL olive oil

2 eggs

1/2 tsp balsamic vinegar

2 tsp fresh rosemary, basil, or oregano, finely chopped (or 1 TBL dried)

Mix It Up

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper or lightly grease. Sprinkle with cornmeal if desired.

- In a small bowl, combine warm water, sugar and yeast. Stir just until dissolved. Cover with a kitchen towel and set aside in warm area for 10 minutes. Mixture will form a foam head about 3/4 of an inch.

- If using a food processor, add all dry ingredients: flours, potato starch, xanthan gum, and salt, directly to the processor bowl. Blend in processor to mix flours together, about 1 minute. If using a large mixing bowl, combine dry ingredients and whisk together until well combined.

- In another small bowl, whisk olive oil, eggs, and vinegar until blended. Add egg mixture and yeast mixture to dry ingredients and mix just until combined.

- Blend dough in a food processor for 2-3 minutes. *Kneading/Mixing Dough* (see page x). Dough will be sticky and soft. Add the ingredients for one of the focaccia variations at this point and gently pulse or mix.

- Transfer dough to baking sheet. Using a rubber spatula or your hands dipped in water or olive oil shape dough into a rectangle or round shape about 1" thick for focaccia and 1/4–1/2" thick for pizza. Place covered in a warm draft-free area, or uncovered in a warming oven, and let rise 40 minutes. Dough should double in size.

- Preheat oven 400 degrees. Brush top with olive oil. Sprinkle with a pinch of coarse salt. Add your choice of seasoning, fresh herbs, or your favorite toppings. Bake for 20–25 minutes or until light brown and crusty.

Makes one 9" loaf

Chef's Notes

Focaccia is super easy to make. You can even use a bowl and combine everything with a fork. Remember to use a rubber spatula or your hands dipped in water or olive oil and spread your dough out to desired thickness.