

Herb and Garlic Focaccia Bread

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 45 minutes | Total Time: 3 hours 30 minutes

Step 1: Proofing the Yeast

- 1 1/3 cups milk
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 1/4 tsp active dry yeast

Combine the sugar and milk in a small saucepan. Heat over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves and the liquid has just warmed through. Pour into a small bowl and let stand for 5 minutes before sprinkling the yeast over top. Let stand for another 10 minutes.

Step 2: Mixing and Kneading the Bread

- 3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Combine 1 1/2 cups of the flour and the salt in an large bowl. Make a well in the center. Add the yeast mixture and olive oil. Mix until a smooth dough forms. Work in more flour as you go until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl and is slightly sticky. Turn onto lightly-floured surface and knead for about 5 minutes. Add a bit of flour from time to time to prevent from sticking but don't add too much.

Step 3: Rise Up

- olive oil

The dough should be smooth and elastic by the time you finish kneading it. Place it into a lightly-greased, extra-large bowl turning it once to grease the top. Cover with plastic wrap or a damp cloth and leave in a warm place to rise for about 2 hours or until tripled in size.

Step 4: Making the Herb Garlic Topping

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/4 cup fresh basil
- 1 tsp fresh rosemary

Finely dice the garlic and chop the rosemary and basil leaves. Heat the olive oil in a small saucepan over low heat for a minute or two. Do not let the garlic brown or it will taste bitter. Remove from the heat and stir in the herbs. Let stand for at least 30 minutes to infuse the oil.

Step 5: Rolling in the Dough

- 1 tbsp yellow cornmeal

Sprinkle cornmeal onto a lightly greased baking sheet. Punch down the dough. Gently roll the dough into a 10 × 15-inch rectangle and about 1/4-inch thick. Transfer to the pan. Gently stretch and shape the dough to cover the pan. Cover again with plastic wrap and let proof until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

In the meantime, preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C).

After proofing, make indentations over the surface with your fingers, about 1/3-inch deep. This is called “dimpling.”

Step 6: The Finishing Touches

- 1/2 tsp fleur de sel

Drizzle the Herb Garlic topping over top. The oil will pool in the dimples.

Sprinkle with finishing salt such as fleur de sel.

Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand in the pan for 5 minutes before removing and transferring to wire rack to cool.

Serve with a dipping dish of olive oil and balsamic vinegar.