

Focaccia

What better place to focus on some focaccia than the *focolare*, Italian for hearth or fireplace, which could very well be the root of this ubiquitous bread. Willie and Ed make it often. It has a simplicity of preparation, a small number of ingredients, and everybody likes it. During the *vendemmia*, grape harvest, focaccia is baked for breakfast with small sugared grapes.

2 packages dry yeast
2 cups warm water
4 to 5 cups all- purpose flour
1 or 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for bowl
Coarse sea salt
Rosemary, minced

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Combine the yeast and water in a large bowl and let stand for about 10 minutes. Then add 4 cups of flour to the bowl and mix well. On a floured surface, knead the dough for 10 to 15 minutes, adding flour as needed, until the dough is uniformly elastic. Oil a large bowl, add the dough, and turn to coat all sides with the oil, then cover with a tea towel and put in a warm place for 1 hour.

Punch down the dough—it should have about doubled—then spread it with your fingers onto a parchment- lined sheet pan. Cover with a tea towel and let it rise again for about 45 minutes.

With your fingertips, dimple the dough all over. Sprinkle with the 1 or 2 tablespoons of oil and then the coarse salt and minced rosemary.

Bake in a hot oven for 20 to 25 minutes, then slide off the sheet pan onto a cooling rack.

Slice into 1-inch strips for snacks or 3-inch squares for sandwiches.

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