

FOCACCIA

3 ½ cups all-purpose flour
2 cups whole wheat flour
2 cups water
2 Tablespoons yeast – dry active
4 Tablespoons sugar – white or brown
2 teaspoons salt
2 Tablespoons olive oil + more for oiling pan and dough ball
kosher salt, or any coarse salt

Dissolve yeast in lukewarm water: 105 - 110*. Add sugar to water. Stir to dissolve. This will activate the yeast. If the yeast does not begin to bubble and froth within a few minutes, do not use it. It is no longer active, and your bread will not rise.

Whisk together flours and salt. Stir water/yeast mixture and olive oil into flours until a dough-ball forms. Do not pour all of the water in a first – hold back about 1/3 cup. It may not be needed. Add water from that 1/3 cup in small amounts until all the flour in the bowl has joined into one ball, with no flour congregating in the bottom of the bowl. It should not feel sticky. If you end up adding too much water, it will feel sticky. If that happens, you can add small amounts of flour during the kneading process.

Sprinkle a bit of flour onto a clean counter. Place your dough ball on top of the flour. Roll the ball towards your body, pressing in from each side. It's almost like you are giving your dough a deep massage. This is called kneading. Do not stick your fingers into the bread. Do not tear or stretch it. This can break the gluten formations and make your bread tough. Simply push and squish from the sides, keeping it as close to a ball shape as you can. Knead on a floured surface, adding small amounts of flour (if needed) until it feels soft; not sticky. An Italian Nana once told me it should feel like your earlobe when it's done.

Grease a large mixing bowl with olive oil. Place dough into bowl. Lightly rub olive oil onto dough-ball. Cover bowl with plastic wrap or a clean dish towel. Place bowl in a warm spot and allow dough to rise until it has doubled in size – usually about an hour.

Grease a cookie sheet or pizza pan with olive oil. Spread bread into pan by pressing with hands. **DO NOT TEAR!** Brush top with still more olive oil and sprinkle with coarse salt. If desired, this would be the time to use flavored or herbed olive oil – such as rosemary and garlic. Yum. Allow to rise for another 20-30 minutes.

Bake in a pre-heated 350* oven for 15-20 minutes. Enjoy!