

## Fresh Focaccia

Perfect for mopping up pasta sauce or soup from bowls or adding some bulk to a light lunch, this may just be the best bread we've ever made. So herby and deliciously seasoned with fresh, extra-virgin olive oil and salt. It's impossible to have just one piece. Making our own bread is so humbling and meditative, and your house will smell delicious!

4 cups bread flour, plus extra for kneading  
1½ cups warm water (110°F)  
1 packet or 2 1/4 tsp active dry yeast  
1 tbsp granulated sugar  
1 cup EVOO, divided  
2 tbsp sea salt, divided  
3 tbsp fresh rosemary, finely chopped  
1 tbsp fresh thyme, finely chopped  
Fresh cracked pepper to taste

Stir together warm water, yeast, and sugar. Let it sit for 10 minutes; the yeast should bubble and foam if it is alive and well.

In the mixing bowl of a stand mixer equipped with a paddle attachment, add the flour and 1 tablespoon of sea salt, and stir them together. Pour in the yeast mixture and 1/2 cup of EVOO, mixing together on low until the flour is incorporated. Then, increase the speed to medium and mix for 5-6 minutes, or until the dough begins to stick to the bowl but forms a sticky ball.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for an additional 5 minutes. Add a bit of oil back into the mixing bowl to coat the bottom, then add the dough back into the bowl and turn it over to coat. Cover the dough with a clean dish towel and let it rise in a warm area - inside the oven with the oven light turned on works great! Let the dough double in size, approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours.

Once the dough has risen, drizzle a 1/4 cup of EVOO on a 9x13" sheet pan, then tip the dough onto the pan. Stretch out the dough on the pan, turning it over once to coat both sides. Use only your fingertips to stretch the dough, avoiding tears and releasing its gases. Give it the traditional dimpled surface to allow EVOO to soak in. Stretch until it reaches the edges of the pan as much as possible. Let it rest another 30-40 minutes covered with a clean towel. Preheat the oven to 425°F in the meantime.

Uncover dough and sprinkle evenly with herbs. Drizzle the remaining ¼ cup of EVOO over the dough and begin pressing the herbs into it, forming indents. Finally, sprinkle each pan with the remaining sea salt and cracked black pepper. Slide the pans into the oven and turn

it down to 375°F immediately. Bake the bread for 25 - 30 minutes, or until it is golden brown. Serve in wedges, slices, or simply place it on the table and let your friends enjoy it!