

Focaccia Bread

ingredients:

- 1 cup of organic wholemeal flour
 - 1 cup of organic white flour
 - a little less than 1 cup of water
 - sea salt
 - ginger
 - a pinch of dry yeast
- half a cup of olives, un-pitted (can be more, depending on how much you like olives and how salty you like the bread to be). Brand: Pelion (www.olivefood.com) available in New Zealand & Australia. Most commercial olives are processed with caustic soda to speed the stringent taste out of them - that is not very nice, it makes the olives taste quite terrible, not to mention what it does to you. This brand does not do that, it just uses time and natural ingredients to do the same. Apart from olives the ingredients are: water, wine vinegar, salt and olive oil.
- rosemary
 - olive oil
 - parmesan cheese

Put two cups of flour through a sieve into a bowl. Make sure the mixing bowl is big enough so that the dough can double in size.

Heat a little less than one cup of water until it is luke warm. (Too hot kills the yeast - rule of thumb: when it burns your thumb it's too hot! - thank you Clive Lawler). I realize I need to quantify the phrase "a little less": fill a cup with water and pour off the top 10 mm.

A note on the flour - water balance: 1 cup of water for 2 cups of flour makes the dough a little too wet. Using a little less water makes the dough a little firmer which is good for this flat bread. Experiment.

Once the water is luke warm, add a quarter teaspoon of ginger powder (it enhances the yeast and you won't taste it) and a quarter teaspoon of salt to the water, maybe less salt if the olives are too salty. Experiment.

Then add a pinch of yeast, you don't need more than the amount that would cover the nail of your little finger (or enough to cover the tip of a tea spoon.)

Make sure the yeast dissolves in the water by stirring with a spoon, then leave for 5 minutes, then stir again.

Add the water to the flour and stir with a big wooden spoon or an egg slice until a consistent ball of dough has formed. Make sure the dough is not too dry, if needed add a little water (a few drops at a time). Make sure you have no dry flour remaining anywhere in the mix or on the sides of the bowl.

Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and put in a warm place. The cylinder cupboard is a good place or in an oven that has been pre-warmed to about 40 C.

I use the oven. I pre-warm it before I start and when I put the dough in I turn it off and leave the dough for 24 hours, or sometimes even 48 hours.

This allows the yeast to spread through the dough and properly ferment (rise) the bread, like bakers used to do in the old days. By fermenting the flour in this way, the bread becomes much easier to digest, readily available or pre-digested, for the body to be able to absorb, and gain much more nutrients from it. Gluten intolerance might have to do with the kind of bread that people are eating these days, not gluten itself which is a protein and a good food if prepared properly. Even most well-meaning organic bakers are not doing this yet. At the most they may do overnight - but basically the longer the better. Franchise bakery chains don't allow more than 3 to 4 hours from start to finish including baking. This is way too little time, and produces wrongly prepared grain - clogging our guts with a somewhat undigestible, gluey substance, causing digestive problems and providing a suitable habitat for candida to set in and thrive.

Grains and beans are best to be soaked for a long time (a day or two) to change the enzyme inhibitors that have worked to keep the seeds in a preserved state all that time. Once the grain is soaked, it is as if it has fallen in wet earth, the enzymes come alive and start to ready the grain to sprout. This process brings alive the enzymes and dramatically increases the nutrients and makes the grains (and beans) more compatible with our bodies - easier to digest, less clogging of our guts with half digested gluten.

The anti-nutrients/enzyme inhibitors are released off into the water - you can smell the phytic acid (I think it is called) in the water of beans which you pour off a few times before cooking them. (same process for porridge - a long soak (ferment) of 30 hours before pouring off much of the water and cooking them in a big pot for many days worth. After they have come to a good boil, wrap up and insulate in a duvet/hot box for 8 hours while they slowly cook on and on to perfection!)

"Long-fermented bread has a much longer shelf life than quick bread. All raw food wants to ferment. If we don't pre-ferment, pre-digest it, it's gonna ferment in our stomachs anyway. It's the same with breads. Quick breads will soon develop fungi, long-ferment breads hardly at all, even after weeks." (Clive Lawler - www.2die4livefoods.com.au)

The next day

Take a flat oven tray and brush some olive oil on it, then sprinkle some flour on the tray, tilt it to let the surplus flour fall on the kitchen bench.

Take the dough out of the bowl and kneed it for a little on the kitchen bench.

Take a rolling pin (a wine bottle works too) and roll the dough out into a round shape about 10 cm in diameter, not too thin.

Make a mixture of sea salt (half a teaspoon) and rosemary (one teaspoon). Best if the salt is ground finely - my salt grinder makes a very fine grind which doubles the volume of the salt. In a little bowl, mix the rosemary by rubbing it with your fingers into the salt, I end up with about two teaspoons of the mixture. This might be too much if you would use salt that is not so finely ground. Experiment. Sea salt is much better than regular supermarket salt, as it still has all the trace minerals of seawater in it. (As always a whole form of food is always better than a refined form.)

Sprinkle the salt and rosemary mixture over the dough. Press the olives deep into the dough so that they are sunken into it. Cover the whole bread with olives. Then sprinkle a liberal amount of organic extra virgin olive oil over the dough. The olive oil should run into the dents where the olives are and not off the bread.

Put the bread in a warm oven (40 C) to rise for about 30 minutes. Make sure the oven has an oven dish with some water in it to create a moist environment, it stops the dough from drying out.

After 30 minutes take the bread out and pre-heat the oven for about 20 minutes to 190 degrees Celsius. I use a regular baking setting, I don't know how fan-baked settings work. Leave the dish with water in the oven. When the oven has reached 190 degrees Celsius put the bread in and bake it for about 15 to 20 minutes. When the bread turns a light brown and the crust is firm, it should be ready. Experiment.

Once baked, sprinkle the bread with a little parmesan cheese and serve it warm with some olive oil for dipping.

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**Before
baking**



**After
baking**

