

# BASIC WHITE FOCACCIA

## Ingredients

- 2 tsp table salt or 1 Tbsp plus 1 tsp kosher salt
- 6 Tbsp plus 2 tsp extra-virgin olive or neutral oil, divided
- 4 1/2 cups bread flour
- 2 cups room-temperature water (70 to 72F)
- 1 packet or 2 1/4 tsp instant yeast
- Finishing salt, to taste (optional)

## Directions

### Initial Mixing:

1. Measure out the salt and 3 Tbsp of the oil and set aside.
2. Place the flour in a large bowl. Make a well in the middle of the flour, then add the room-temperature water to the well. Sprinkle the yeast over the liquid.
3. Using a bowl scraper, blend the flour with the water and yeast by moving around the bowl from the outside and bringing the flour to the middle. Use a chopping motion to initially mix the flour into the water-yeast mixture.
4. When most of the flour has been absorbed, use your hands to finish incorporating all the flour until a shaggy ball forms. Once all the flour has been incorporated and there is no dry flour left, cover the dough and let rest in a warm, draft-free place for 15 minutes. This step is known as autolysis.

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## Directions, cont.

### Multitask Moment:

While the dough is resting, start gathering the other ingredients for your chosen project.

### Dough Development and First Rise:

1. Uncover the dough in the bowl. Sprinkle the pre-measured salt over the top of the dough and drizzle the pre-measured oil around the circumference of the dough.
2. With wet fingers, squish the salt and oil into the dough.
3. Once all the ingredients are well blended, begin the first set of stretch and folds, 10 to 12 times.
4. Cover the dough and let rest in a warm, draft-free place for an additional 15 to 20 minutes.

### Dough Development and Second Rise:

1. Uncover the rested dough and repeat 10 to 12 stretch and folds.
2. Coat the bowl with 2 tsp of oil, add the dough, and cover. (If you need to start the recipe ahead of time, at this point the dough can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 48 hours.)
3. Allow the dough to proof, covered, in a warm, draft-free place for about 1 hour. The dough should just about double in size and be smooth and supple.

### Multitask Moment:

Being to prepare the decorations for your chosen project.

# BASIC WHITE FOCACCIA

## Directions, cont.

### Oven Preparation:

Thirty minutes prior to baking, move the oven rack to the middle and preheat the oven to 450 degrees, allowing time for the oven to come to full temperature. If you are using a baking stone, preheat the oven for at least 45 minutes to allow for the oven and stone to come to full temperature.

### Shaping:

1. Line an 18x13-inch baking sheet with parchment paper and oil it with 1 Tbsp of oil.
2. Using a bowl scraper or oiled hand, gently transfer the dough to the middle of the sheet with the smooth side of the dough facing up. If the dough lands upside down, gently flip it over so the smooth side is up.
3. Gently begin shaping and dimpling the dough using all ten fingers, piano style, to press down into the dough. Shape the dough into a rectangular dough "canvas," about 16x11 inches, leaving space on all sides for expansion. If the dough is springing back, allow it to rest for 5 to 8 minutes. After this rest, the dough will be supple and ready for shaping again.

### Decorating:

1. Coat the dough with the remaining 2 Tbsp oil, then decorate the focaccia according to the directions of your chosen project.
2. Once you have finished decorating, survey the surface and deflate any large air bubbles with a toothpick or skewer, leaving smaller ones intact. Give a few pokes all around the dough to level out the playing field, so to speak--this is called docking.

**Source: *Beautiful Breads* (Culletto)**

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## Directions, cont.

2. (continued) Using piano-style finger motions, gently dimple the dough again. Ultimately, you want to see an uneven bubbly texture, about 1 1/2 to 2 inches in various spots. If the focaccia is flat, allow it to rest for 8 to 10 minutes in a warm, draft-free place.

### Baking:

1. Just before placing the focaccia in the oven, check the decorations to be sure they are all snug. Secure any that look to be popping off using a chopstick, skewer, or your fingers.
2. Add finishing salt (if using) and place the focaccia on the middle rack.
3. Bake for 8 minutes at 450F then reduce the heat to 375F and check the decorations again. If any are popping off, coerce them back into the dough by gently and carefully poking down. You don't want to burn yourself or deflate the dough. Bake for 10 to 16 more minutes, until the focaccia is golden brown and crisp on the edges.
4. It can be extremely tempting to cut into a nice hot loaf of bread straight out of the oven, but it is important to allow the bread to cool slightly and let off a little steam, so to speak, because the bread is still finishing its bake after being removed from the oven. Let rest for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting.

### Baking with a Baking Stone:

If using a baking stone, slide the focaccia onto a peel using the parchment paper for easy transfer. Place the focaccia directly onto the stone with the parchment underneath and bake for 18 to 22 minutes. Check the bottom of the focaccia after 10 minutes of baking, reducing the temperature to 375. If it appears to be getting too dark, move it back to the pan and finish baking it in the pan until the top is golden brown.