FOCACCIA   BREAD

This is a very nice Italian bread that is great with any Italian dinner, but also makes an amazing sandwich. I actually perfected this recipe in a billeting room at Keesler Air Force Base. For an extra flavor sensation, try barbecuing it!

1 cup warm Water
3 cups Bread Flour
1/4 cup Sugar
1/4 cup Olive Oil
1 2 teaspoons Salt
1 package or 1 1/2 teaspoons dry Yeast
1/2 teaspoon Garlic Powder
1/2 teaspoon Oregano (1/4 teaspoon ground)
1/2 teaspoon Basil

In a large mixing bowl, add warm water, sugar, yeast, 1 cup of flour, and mix well. Allow to sit for 5 to 10 minutes, and come back and check it. It should be bubbly, which means your yeast is happy and doing the things yeast is supposed to do. This process is called "proofing". There are few things more frustrating than going to all the trouble of making bread, and finding out your yeast is dead.

Add the rest of the ingredients and knead until the dough is soft and smooth. Brush lightly with olive oil, and place in a covered bowl in a warm place for 1-2 hours, or until double in size.

Once it is doubled, punch it down, knead it a little bit, and divide into quarters or sixths. Either using your hands or a rolling pin, shape each ball of dough into a disc approximately 5" to 6" in diameter. Brush lightly with olive oil, put them back in their warm happy place, and allow to rise into the shape of a large hamburger bun, another 1 - 2 hours. Remember that when you place them in the hot oven, the heat will cause the air to expand, and they will rise even more.

When they look about right, place loaves into a 350 degree oven and bake for 15-20 minutes. The tops should be nice and brown when they're done, and should be brushed with olive oil for a softer crust, or you can leave it alone for a crunchier crust.

Allow to cool on a wire rack.

4 loaves = 350 calories each
6 loaves = 233 calories each