

GRILLED FOCACCIA

I got this recipe from “The Bread Bible” and it’s wonderful. Cooking focaccia on the grill gives it a wonderful smoky flavor. The trick is to cook the dough on a cookie sheet for the first 2 minutes, just to set it, so that it can then be slipped onto the grill for a few seconds, just until it begins to brown. This recipe makes 2 or 4 loaves, about 6 inches in diameter. If you don’t want to use your grill, that’s OK! There are instructions for baking as well, and it’s still awesome!

INGREDIENTS FOR DOUGH:

(2 Loaves)

1 ½ Cup + 2 Tablespoons Flour (8 ounces)
1 teaspoon dry Yeast
1 teaspoon Sugar
1 teaspoon Salt
2/3 Cup Water (5.5 ounces)
1 Tablespoon Fresh Chopped Rosemary*

(4 Loaves)

3 ¼ Cups Flour (16 ounces)
1 ½ tsp Yeast (1 envelope)
2 teaspoons Sugar
2 teaspoons Salt
1 1/3 Cups Water (11 oz.)
2 Tbsp. Fresh Chopped Rosemary*

TOPPINGS:

2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
1 Tablespoon Fresh Chopped Rosemary*
1 ½ teaspoons Minced Garlic
Sea Salt
Freshly Ground Pepper

¼ Cup Olive Oil
2 Tbsp. Fresh Chopped Rosemary*
1 Tablespoon Minced Garlic
Sea Salt
Freshly Ground Pepper

* If you don’t have fresh rosemary it’s OK to use dried, but reduce the quantity by half.

DIRECTIONS:

In a medium bowl, combine the water, yeast, and about half of the flour, and stir with a stout mixing spoon for about 15 seconds or so. Add the rest of the flour and salt and stir until a ball begins to form and there is no excess flour in the bowl. The dough will be very sticky and shaggy looking. Don’t worry, that’s how it’s supposed to look.

Pour the olive oil into another bowl, then place the dough into the oil, turning it so all sides of the dough are coated. Cover it tightly and allow it to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes or until slightly puffy. (If you are going to cook this later, set the dough, still in the bowl, in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours; remove 1 hour before you are ready to put it in the oven.) If you want bread today, let the dough sit for another 30 minutes to 1 hour at room temperature until doubled.

With lightly oiled fingers, lift the dough out of the bowl and hold it in one hand while you pour some of the leftover oil from the bowl onto a cookie sheet (2 sheets if you are making 4 loaves) and spread it all over with your fingers.

NOTE: If you are going to cook on your grill, your cookie sheets may wind up slightly altered, so don't use your best pans.

Divide the dough into the appropriate number of loaves. Press the dough down with your fingers to deflate it gently, then shape it into a smooth round by tucking under the edges. Let the dough rest for 15 minutes, covered to relax it.

Using your fingertips, press the dough from the center to the outer edge to stretch it into a round that is 6 to 8 inches in diameter. Brush the top of the dough with any oil remaining in the bowl and cover it with plastic wrap. Let the dough rise for 20 to 30 minutes or until light and spongy looking. As the dough is rising....

Preheat a covered gas grill (all burners) to 500 degrees. **OR** Preheat oven with a baking stone (if you have one) to 475 degrees

Using your fingertips, press deep dimples at one inch intervals all over the dough. Sprinkle it with rosemary, salt, and pepper.

TO BAKE:

Preheat the oven to 475 degrees 30 minutes before baking. Have an oven shelf at the lowest level and place baking stone or heavy baking sheet on it before preheating.

Place the sheet with the focaccia on the hot stone and bake for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle the top with garlic, slip a pancake turner underneath the dough to loosen it, and slip it directly onto the stone. Continue baking for another 5 minutes or until the top begins to brown around the edges.

TO GRILL:

Turn one side of your preheated grill to low and place the focaccia, still on the baking sheet, on the hottest side of the grill. Cover the grill and wait 2 minutes. Slide a pancake turner underneath the dough to loosen it and slip it directly onto the cooler side of the grill for just a few seconds - you'll smell it browning. Lift an edge with the pancake turner to check, and as soon as deep brown grill marks appear, return the focaccia to the baking sheet and keep in on the cooler side of the grill. Sprinkle on the garlic, cover the grill, and cook for 7 to 8 minutes longer or until the top begins to brown around the edges.

Eat as is or serve with olive oil, balsamic vinegar, and grated Parmesan or Asiago cheese!

