

FOCACCIA (ITALIAN FLATBREAD)

Sponge:

Water	4 oz
Yeast	1/2 tsp
Bread Flour	4 oz

Leave 12 hours at room temperature

Dough:

Sponge from above		
Water	12 oz	
Red Table Wine	3 oz	
Yeast	1/8 oz dry	(1/4 tsp)
Bread Flour*	1 lb 3 oz	
Cabernet Wine Flour	5 1/2 oz	
Olive Oil	1/4 oz	(1 tsp)
Salt	5/8 oz	(2 1/2 tsp)

**You may substitute up to 1/3 of the bread flour with whole-wheat flour.*

Directions:

1. Mix together the ingredients for the sponge in a stainless steel bowl and let sit for 12 hours at room temperature.
2. Combine the water, wine, yeast, and sponge in a heavy-duty mixer bowl fitted with a dough hook. Mix gently just combine then add the flours, olive oil and salt.
3. Mix on low speed, about 4 – 8 minutes, until the dough seems smooth and homogenous. This dough will be wet and may still stick to the mixer bowl. The dough will “mix” more when the dough gets folded.
4. Pour the dough into a lightly oiled bowl, turning the dough once to coat the top with oil. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise.
5. After 30 minutes, turn the dough out onto a floured table or pan and fold it like a letter for an envelope. Turn 90 degrees and fold again. Then place the dough back in the oiled bowl.
6. After 30 minutes more, do the same fold and turn as in step 5. This process gently develops the gluten, while the bread is also developing flavor. Let the bread rise for another 30 minutes.
7. At this point, the dough could hibernate in the refrigerator up to 8 hours. If this happens, allow the dough to come to room temperature (about 2 hours).
8. Turn the dough out onto the floured table or pan. Do not flatten the dough out as you would for other breads. Cut the dough into the sizes desired and place them on a greased lined pan. Gently stretch the dough out by placing your fingers underneath the dough, lifting and pulling gingerly. Now the dough is ready for its final rise. Cover with plastic loosely.
9. Prepare toppings (if using) and preheat the oven and baking stone (if using) to 450 F. Once the focaccia do not bounce back when poked, dip your fingers in some olive oil and press them repeatedly and gently into the dough. This will prevent the breads from turning into big balloons. Add toppings and bake on the baking stone until golden brown, approx. 20 minutes.