

Italian Focaccia

Recipe By Clara Fatal



Cooking and Prep:  2
h 10 m

Serves:  7

Contains:    

Preference: Dairy

Difficulty: Medium

Occasion: Shavuot, Nine
Days

Source: Family Table by
Mishpacha Magazine

Cuisines: Italian

Focaccia is a light and airy Italian bread. The fried vegetables add a pretty and colorful topping. Welcome to Italy!

Ingredients (18)

Dough

- 2 and 1/2 cups water
- 2.2 pounds (1 kilogram) flour
- 2 ounces (2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon, or 50 grams) fresh yeast
- 1 packet dough enhancer (*optional*)

- 1 tablespoon salt
 - 1/2 cup **Gefen Olive Oil**, divided, plus a bit more for oiling the dough
 - 1 egg
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Topping

- 2 medium eggplants
 - oil, for frying
 - 3 red peppers
 - 3 orange peppers
 - 3 yellow peppers
 - 1 large sweet potato
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Garnish

- cherry tomatoes
 - feta cheese
 - Atlantic sea salt or **Haddar Kosher Salt**
 - Gefen Olive Oil**
 - fresh thyme leaves
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Start Cooking

Make the Focaccia

1. Combine flour and yeast in a mixer bowl fitted with a dough hook. Add water, egg, 1/4 cup olive oil, and salt. Knead slowly for five minutes. Allow dough to rest for five minutes, and then knead again at medium speed for five more minutes, until a soft, workable dough forms. If the dough isn't soft enough, add a bit more water.

2.

Roll the dough into a large ball and oil the top. Pour 1/4 cup olive oil into the mixer bowl and allow the dough to rise in the oil bath. Cover with a greased plastic bag and allow to rise until doubled in size (about 25 minutes).

3. Meanwhile, rinse eggplants, dry, and cut into medium-sized cubes. Sprinkle with salt and leave in a colander for a 30–60 minutes, allowing liquid to drain off. Squeeze out excess liquid with a kitchen towel, and deep-fry until golden. Remove from pan and place on absorbent paper towels. Set aside.
4. Rinse red peppers, dry, and remove inner core and seeds. Cut into cubes, deep-fry until just soft (don't allow them to brown), and remove from oil with a slotted spoon. Place on absorbent paper towels and set aside. Repeat the same procedure with the orange and yellow peppers, making sure to fry each color separately.
5. Peel sweet potato, trim edges, and cut into symmetrical 1-inch (2.5 cm) squares. Deep-fry just until very lightly browned. Remove with a slotted spoon and place on absorbent paper towels.
6. Divide dough into seven balls and place on a greased baking sheet. Allow to rise 10 minutes. Stretch each ball of dough between your fingers to form a long, oval-shaped focaccia. The focaccia should be as long as your baking sheet (about 16 inches or 40 cm). Line baking sheets with Gefen Easy Baking Parchment Paper and place 2 focaccias on each sheet.
7. Use your fingers to form long indentations along the length of the focaccia. Top each focaccia with cubes of eggplant, sweet potato, and all three types of peppers. Garnish with cherry tomatoes and chunks of feta or salty cheese. Brush the edges of the focaccia with olive oil, sprinkle with sea salt or kosher salt, and, for the final touch, drizzle a bit more olive oil over the vegetables. Allow to rise another 10 minutes.
8. Preheat oven to 430 degrees Fahrenheit (220 degrees Celsius). Bake 15 minutes. Remove from oven and cool on a rack, so that the focaccias don't become soggy on the bottom.
9. Before serving, sprinkle warm focaccias with more cheese and fresh thyme or basil leaves. There's nothing like warm, crispy focaccias, and they are best eaten fresh.

Note:

• Don't forget to take challah. Click [here](#) for more information.

• Focaccias can be frozen, minus the sweet potatoes. For that fresh-out-of-the-oven taste, wrap the focaccias in aluminum foil and reheat at 325 degrees Fahrenheit (170 degrees Celsius).

Tip:

- To avoid having your veggies turn black from the oil, it's best to strain the oil between batches of vegetables. Line a heat-resistant (stainless steel) colander with thick paper towels and place a bowl underneath it. Pour oil through the strainer. The black that accumulated in the oil will remain on the paper towels, and the strained oil will be clear.
- If you're in a rush, you can divide the dough in half and place it in two separate bowls. It will rise faster that way.