

# How to Make Easy Focaccia Bread

## Prepare

1. Carefully measure 1¼ cups of lukewarm (110 degrees) water. The water should be slightly warmer than body temperature when you immerse your finger in it.
2. Grease the baking sheet well and sprinkle with corn meal (not included).
3. Mix the herbs from one packet into 1/3 cup olive oil and set aside.

## Mix

1. Stir the mix to redistribute ingredients after shipping. Place about one half of the bread mix in the mixer bowl. Add the yeast, pour in the water, and mix with a dough hook for 30 seconds or until the yeast is dissolved and the ingredients begin to combine.
2. Add two tablespoons olive oil and the rest of the mix and continue mixing at a medium speed for four minutes. (It is important that the dough be mixed for at least four minutes to develop the gluten.) The mix is precisely designed for this amount of water. Water absorption may vary depending on environmental conditions. If you feel that the dough is too moist, add one or two tablespoons of additional flour. Once the dough is mixed, scrape the dough onto the prepared pan.



## Form

1. Lightly grease your hands and press the dough flat into the pan. The dough amount is designed for a 15-inch pizza pan or two 10-inch pans.
2. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside to rise until it has doubled, about 40 minutes for the onion focaccia and up 1 1/2 hours for the cheese focaccia. (The cheese focaccia is slower to rise because of the high cheese content.)

## Bake

1. While the bread is still rising, preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Just before baking, use your fingers to press dimples in the dough in two-inch intervals then drizzle 1/3 cup of olive oil and herb mixture onto the bread. (See the picture above—a 15-inch focaccia ready for the oven.)
3. Bake for 15 minutes or until the bread is a rich golden brown.
4. Remove the bread from the oven and slide the bread off the pan to cool on a wire rack.

## Storing your focaccia

Unused focaccia should be stored in plastic at room temperature unless moist additional toppings have been added, in which case the focaccia should be frozen or refrigerated. Focaccia can be frozen either sliced or whole. If sliced, individual slices can be removed as needed. After thawing, the bread can be rewarmed by placing it in a 350-degree oven for eight to ten minutes. After rewarming, the bread should be used within a day.

## Directions for Hand Mixing

You can bake great bread without a mixer. In fact, some of the best bakers prefer the intimacy of working the dough by hand.

Follow the directions, combining the bread mix and all but ¼ cup of the liquid by hand with a spatula. When the dough becomes too heavy to mix with a spatula, instead of adding more water, grease your hands with shortening along with a 15-inch area on a clean counter. Scrape the dough onto the counter. Knead the dough by pressing the heel of your hand into the dough, turning the dough, and then pressing again until the mix is absorbed into the dough. Add more water as necessary until the dough is as moist as you can handle. Continue kneading for eight to ten minutes adding more shortening to your hands and counter as needed. If the dough becomes too sticky to work, even with greased hands, add flour (not included) one tablespoon at time, kneading between additions. Do not add more than is necessary—a softer dough will rise more readily and have a better structure. When the dough is smooth and elastic, it is ready for the pan. Follow the remaining directions.