

How to Make Pita Pocket Sandwiches

We teach a pita pocket sandwich class at our store. So it had better be good, it better be easy, and it better feed a crowd. That means that we tinker and tinker until we find the best way to make the best pitas in a hurry. Here we'll tell you how to make both the pockets and the sandwiches.

We had a pita party. We made pita sandwiches for the crew. (There are benefits to working at The Prepared Pantry.) Just as homemade bread is much better than store bread, so are homemade pitas better. And they are really quite easy to make. Once your family has had fresh homemade pitas, you'll never get by with store pitas again.



You can make your pita pockets with the recipe below or with a bread mix. Choose a bread mix to match the occasion. (We have over 80 bread mixes to choose from.)

Homemade pitas are easy to make with just a few ingredients and basic kitchen equipment. To make your pitas, you will need a mister, a rolling pan, and a baking stone.

Ingredients

2 3/4 cups bread flour
1 7-gram packet of instant yeast
1 1/4 cups warm (105 degree) water
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup stone ground whole wheat flour
2 teaspoons salt

Directions

1. With your stand type mixer, combine about 2/3's of the white flour, the yeast, and the warm water. Mix with a dough hook for about 30 seconds. (This mixes in and hydrates the yeast.) Add the rest of the flour, the whole wheat flour, and then the olive oil and salt. Knead with the dough hook for about four minutes on medium speed or until the gluten is formed. Add a little more flour or water if needed to get the right consistency. The dough should be slightly wetter than bread dough.
2. Remove the dough to a greased bowl and let sit for about an hour or until the dough has doubled in size and is puffy.
3. Place a rack on the lowest shelf in the oven and remove the second rack so that you can reach into the oven with the formed pitas. Place a baking stone on the rack. Preheat the oven to 475 degrees.

4. Form the dough into 2-inch balls. (If you have a kitchen scale, 2 1/2 ounces will make a nice pocket.) With a rolling pin, roll the balls flat to a thickness of about 1/4 inch. Let these discs sit on the counter uncovered for ten to fifteen minutes.
5. Pick up a disk and spray it with water using a mister, so that the top slightly wet. Fold the dough over to trap the moisture. Dust an area on the counter with flour using a flour and sugar shaker. With the palm of your hand, pat the disk flat to 1/4-inch thickness again, turning once. If the disks are out-of-round, that's okay. Repeat with the rest of the disks. Let them rest for ten minutes.
6. Place three or four of the flat disks on the hot baking stone in the oven. An easy way to do it is to place the disks on a pizza peel and then slide the disks from the peel onto the hot stone. Bake for 3 1/2 to 4 minutes. The pitas should be puffy but not browned. Remove the pitas from the oven and let them cool on a wire rack. Continue until all are baked.

Baker's notes: *It is the water turning to steam in the hot oven that makes the pitas puffy. If your pitas do not puff, there is not enough moisture trapped in the dough. They will still taste good.*

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There is no wrong way to make pita pocket sandwiches.

Cut your pockets in half. Some of your pockets will be hollower than others. That's okay, Use your thumb to compress the bread and hollow out the shell as needed.

For our classes, we use mayo, provolone cheese, deli lunch meat, tomatoes, and sprouts or lettuce. We form a sandwich bar and let people make their own sandwiches and add what they wish.

We set the ingredients out to be used in this order: Mayo, cheese, meat, tomato, and sprouts or shredded lettuce. Usually a half teaspoon of mayo will do. We cut the cheese slices and meat slices into pieces a little smaller than the pocket halves. We cut the tomatoes into slices and then into half slices or fourths. The lettuce or sprouts are the last item inserted into the pockets with enough is used to stuff the pockets.

Everyone loves pita pockets.

What You'll Need

- A pizza stone
- A pizza peel or large spatula
- A cooling rack
- A mister