

Focaccia

This is Carol Field's recipe (from *The Italian Baker*) modified by Cook's Illustrated to use a sponge for a lighter crumb with large air holes.

1 9oz russet potato, peeled and quartered,
simmered 25 minutes and riced; use 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups;

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp instant yeast

17 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz AP flour

1 cup warm water

2 Tbsp EVOO

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

3 Tbsp fresh rosemary

In stand mixer, combine yeast, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Cover and wait 30 minutes. Sponge will be bubbly.

Add potato, remaining flour and water, EVOO and salt. Mix on low until dough comes together; then on medium for 5 minutes until smooth and elastic. Oil well and place in large white bowl, covered, in small oven pre-heated to proof and turned off, until doubled, about 1 hour.

Divide and stretch with wet hands into 2 well-oiled quarter-sheet pans. Dough may need a 15 minute rest in order to be stretched enough. Cover and let rise in small oven for 1 hour. Set large oven to 425°.

Dimple the tops with wet fingers and sprinkle with EVOO, 2 Tbsp+ fresh rosemary and kosher salt. Bake for 23 minutes (perhaps less?) on baking steel or stone.

Freezes well: heat unwrapped focaccia in a 325° oven for 15 minutes.

Can form into rounds on a peel with plenty of cornmeal; then bake on steel.

Can substitute sage: 1 Tbsp chopped in dough and 24 whole leaves on top.

Can top with cup of parmigiano; or with 1 tsp thyme and black olives.