



Soft and Chewy Balkan Bread

Jacob · 28/09/2024



Prep Time

1 hr 30 mins

Difficult

Medium

Servings

2 hrs 5 mins

Description

Pogacha is a type of bread baked in the ashes of a fireplace and later on in the oven. This bread is found in the cuisines of the Balkans and Turkey. I found it after searching high and low for a great bread to bake for my homemade panini. I tried maybe a dozen bread recipes over the years just to get it right. I needed a bread that was light and airy that you could press using a panini press and wouldn't get too hard to chew or too thick to eat.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cup milk - 1 ½ cup water - 1 ½ teaspoons white sugar - 2 ½ teaspoons active dry yeast - 2 cups bread flour
- ½ teaspoon salt - ¼ cup olive oil
- or as needed

Instructions

1. Mix milk and water in a pot over low heat. Heat
2. stirring constantly
3. until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the pot reads 110 degrees F (43 degrees C). Remove from heat. Add sugar and stir to dissolve. Pour mixture into a cup or other cylindrical glass; sprinkle yeast on top. Let mixture rest until yeast is frothy and fragrant
4. about 10 minutes. Stir flour and salt together in a large mixing bowl. Pour in yeast mixture and mix until a sticky dough forms. Turn dough out on a floured work surface and knead quickly for 5 minutes. Shape dough into a ball. Grease a large bowl with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add dough; toss around the bowl a few times to coat evenly with oil. Cover with plastic wrap and a towel. Let rise in a warm place until doubled in size
5. about 1 hour. Return dough back to the work surface and punch down. Coat your hands with a little olive oil and knead again for 1 minute. Divide into 5 balls. Flatten balls out into thick rectangles. Place rectangles of dough onto a greased baking sheet. Brush tops with a thin coat of olive oil. Let rest for 20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) while dough rests. Bake bread in the preheated oven for 12 minutes. Switch to the broil setting until the tops of rolls turn golden brown
6. about 1 minute. Remove from the baking sheet and allow to cool completely. Cut rolls in half lengthwise.
Tips For an Italian taste
7. I add 1/8 cup of one or more of the following: rosemary
8. thyme
9. basil
10. garlic powder
11. onion powder
12. and sometimes cut-up Kalamata olives. I top bread with thin onion slices
13. mozzarella
14. and Parmesan cheese. Or for a kick
15. I add 1/8 cup of one or more of the following: jarred jalapeño slices or diced fresh jalapeños
16. shredded Cheddar cheese
17. garlic powder
18. and red onion. I top bread with additional shredded Cheddar cheese and jalapeños. For a flavor that mimics Red Lobster Cheddar biscuits
19. I add 1/8 cup of the following: cayenne pepper
20. garlic powder
21. shredded Cheddar cheese
22. chopped green onion
23. and dried parsley. I top bread with extra shredded Cheddar and parsley.