

DOUBLE-HYDRATION FOCACCIA

(inspired by The Fresh Loaf Forum)

2 cups lukewarm water, divided
2 tsp active dry yeast
4 cups unbleached bread flour
3 tsp salt
2-3 tsp olive oil
2 T chopped fresh rosemary
1 tsp kosher salt

Measure 1 + 1/2 cup of water in a large bowl, sprinkle yeast over water and stir until dissolved. Using a strong wooden spoon mix 2 cups of flour until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the remaining 2 cups of flour, and knead with your hands (inside the bowl is fine), until the dough forms a very shaggy mass. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let it sit at room temperature for 20 minutes.

Dissolve the salt in the remaining 1/2 cup of (lukewarm) water. Add it to the dough, and mix with your hands using a squishing/kneading motion. Do not be alarmed by the look of the dough at this point. Slowly the water and salt will find their way into the mixture. Once it all seems incorporated, cover the bowl and let it rise undisturbed for 1 hour and 20 minutes. The dough will be very bubbly at this point.

Heat the oven to 450F. Lightly oil a 9 x 13 inch baking sheet. Pour the dough onto the sheet, brush the surface with 2 tsp olive oil. Dip your fingers in cold water or olive oil and make indentations all over the dough, working to stretch the dough as you go. Brush the surface with another teaspoon of olive oil, sprinkle with rosemary and salt.

Place in the oven and bake for about 20 minutes, until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack and enjoy!