

QUILTED FOCACCIA BUNS

(from *Theresa Culetto*)

pre-ferment:

146g bread flour (about 1 cup)

125g cool water (about 3/4 cup)

1/4 teaspoon instant yeast

for the dough:

all the pre-ferment

450g bread flour (about 3 cups)

285g warm water (about 1 + 1/4 cup) 285 grams

1 + 1/2 teaspoons instant yeast

12g salt (2 teaspoons)

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

toppings of your choice, cut in small pieces. Avoid veggies that are too full of liquid, if using mushrooms it is best to sautee them before adding to the bread.

Make the pre-ferment the day before by mixing all ingredients and allowing to ferment covered at room temperature. Next day, make the dough. Place the water and the yeast in a large bowl. Add all the pre-ferment and 1 tablespoon of oil. Mix with your hands to try to dissolve the pre-ferment in the water, then add the flour and the salt. Mix all ingredients together until the dough just comes together in a shaggy ball. It will appear lumpy and sticky. Let it rest covered for 15 minutes.

Make a set of folds, let the dough rest for 15 minutes. Do three sessions of foldings with 15 minute rest between the sets, for a total of 45 minutes. Now ferment the dough for 2 hours.

Divide dough by cutting one third and two thirds. The larger piece will be spread out with your fingers onto a baking sheet you have prepared with parchment paper and flour . you should stretch the dough out to be approximately 12×6.

Make the strips for the lattice: take the smaller piece of dough (1 third) and roll out to a 12×6 rectangle on a well floured surface. This should be about 1/4 inch thick when done. With a ruler and a pizza cutter make 1/4th inch thick strips 12 inch long , separate and place strips on well floured parchment. You will end up with about 16 strips. Set aside.

Cut the main dough into 8 equal pieces about 3×3 each . Separate each piece to place them about one inch apart. Brush each square with egg wash. Starting at the corner of the pan begin placing strips in one direction and then diagonally to cover the buns with a lattice. Trim back to 1 inch around buns using scissors. Tuck the loose ends under the buns.

Brush egg wash over each bun and begin decorating with various vegetables. Be sure to tuck them in so they do not cover the crisscross lines. After the buns have been decorated you can sprinkle with a little salt. Bake immediately in 425 degree oven for 20 minutes or until golden brown.