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Pitta Pane

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups (500 grams) bread flour
- 1 1/2 cups (350 ml) lukewarm water
- 1 packet dry yeast
- 1 TBSP olive oil
- 2 tsps salt
- 2 tsps sugar

DIRECTIONS

- Begin by dissolving sugar in lukewarm water.
- Add the dry yeast and stir.
- Set aside.
- Place flour in the bowl of a stand mixer.
- Attach the dough hook.
- Activate the mixer on lowest speed.
- Add the water mix slowly.
- Next, add the oil and continue mixing.
- Lastly, add the salt.
- Increase speed to medium and mix for 10 minutes.
- Note: you can do those steps by hand but you'll have to knead the dough for 20 minutes.
- Remove dough and place in an oiled, large bowl.
- Cover with plastic film first and a kitchen towel over that.

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DIRECTIONS (CONT.)

- Place in warm, draft free area to rise.
- When dough has doubled in size (1 1/2 to 2 hrs), remove dough to floured parchment paper laying over a large cookie sheet.
- Gently flatten out the dough, being careful not to deflate it (see Tips).
- Carefully carve a hole, at least 4" wide, in the center of dough.
- Use flour on your hands to help achieve this step.
- Bread should resemble a large donut.
- Cover bread with plastic film and place back in a warm area to rise for an additional 45 minutes.
- Fifteen minutes before bread is ready to bake, preheat oven to 450F.
- Remove film and place cookie sheet in center of hot oven.
- Bake for 30 minutes, spraying some water over bread surface at the 15 minute mark.
- Note: Bread should be golden. If it's darkening too quickly, loosely cover bread with foil.

Pitta Pane continued...

NONNA'S TIPS

- If you want quicker rising, use fast rising dry yeast. Make sure to use a good brand since I've had bad experiences with cheaper store brands.
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- I prefer to use semolina flour on the bottom of my bread because of the crunch. It's simple, instead of using regular flour, sprinkle semolina on parchment paper.
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- When shaping the bread, try to be very gentle to avoid air bubbles escaping the dough. Air bubbles make the bread lighter.