

## PITA



## INGREDIENTS

1 package dried yeast	2½ cups flour	1-2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp sugar	1 tsp salt	Za'atar, to taste
1 cup warm water		



*Adapted from Olive Oil & Lemons,  
by Dina*



*Serves 8-10*

## INSTRUCTIONS

Mix the yeast and sugar with the warm water, and let it sit for ten minutes. The water will dissolve the dry coating around the granules of yeast, releasing the active yeast inside. A bubbly foam will start to form on the surface, which is proof that the yeast is active.

Place a pizza stone or cookie sheet in the oven and heat it up to its highest temperature, about 500°. The oven should be at that temperature for at least 30 minutes before you bake the pita.

Place 2 cups of the flour and the salt in a food processor and pulse a few times to aerate the flour.

When the yeast is ready, pour the liquid over the flour in the food processor and add a tbsp or two of olive oil.

Begin blending the dough just until it is mixed. Add the remaining flour and continue mixing only until it begins to pull together into a mass.

Scrape the sticky dough onto a lightly floured parchment sheet on the counter and bring it together, adding just a little bit of flour as necessary. The dough will be somewhat sticky, but should come together into a soft dough nicely. Knead it a little, gathering it into a soft and shiny ball. Drizzle a little olive oil into a ceramic or glass bowl and place the ball of dough in

it, rolling it around to coat with the oil. Cover with a towel or plastic and let the dough rise until it doubles in size.

When the dough is ready, turn it onto the floured parchment and press to deflate.

Roll the dough with your hands into a cylinder and cut into 8-10 equal portions. No worries if they are not exactly even, a few different size pitas are just fine.

Let the dough rest for 10 minutes to relax the gluten, then with a rolling pin roll out each ball into a circle. The smaller the circle, the puffier the pita. About ⅓ inch thick would make a nice fluffy pita. Let the dough circles rest now until they begin to rise and puff, about 10-15 minutes.

Sprinkle some za'atar on the pita before you bake it. Using your hands—or better yet, a pizza peel—place the pita rounds, two at a time, in the oven and close the door. Within a minute you should see them puff up.

Turn them over once. These pitas are not meant to be golden brown, they remain white with a couple of dark spots here and there. If you over-bake them, they will be dry.

As soon as they are ready, remove from oven, place on a cooling rack, and cover with a damp towel. Repeat with remaining dough.

# PITA

Israelis use pita as a holder for just about anything you'd like to eat. Of course, you can fill it with falafel or hummus, but it's also often stuffed with grilled meats, a variety of salads—and even French fries! Restaurants that serve a *mezze*—huge array of tiny plates with salads, spreads, dips, and vegetable delicacies—generally offer bottomless baskets of hot fresh pita, which diners use to scoop up the appetizers.

Baking pita is an adventure, highlighted by watching the round mounds of dough rise up like balloons in the oven. Sometimes they get so big you're sure they're going to pop—but then they don't. Less complicated pita can be baked on a campfire using a traditional *saj*, a sort of upside down wok that is placed over the campfire: flatten a piece of dough and toss it on the *saj* for a couple of minutes till it starts to brown. Dip in olive oil, sprinkle with za'atar and sumac, and eat it while it's hot!

## NOTES

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