

Paul's Bread Pages

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Ciabatta

Italian slipper bread requires a starter dough (*Biga*). For authenticity this requires fresh yeast.

5 grams of fresh yeast, 150ml of warm water, 300 grams of unbleached plain flour.

Mix the fresh yeast with the warm water. Sift the flour into a clean bowl and add the yeast mixture. Mix into a sloppy dough and dust with more flour. Knead lightly and place in on oiled bowl. Cover in lightly oiled cling film. Leave to ferment for about 15 hours.

15 grams of fresh yeast, 400ml warm water, 500g strong white flour,
60ml warm milk, pinch of salt, 50ml virgin olive oil.

Prepare 3 baking sheets sprinkled with flour. Using a large bowl, mix the yeast for the dough with a little warm water until it has a creamy consistency. Add to the *Biga* starter and gradually mix in. Add the warm milk at this stage and beat thoroughly with a wooden spoon.

Add in the flour gradually, mixing to form a wet dough. Beat in the salt and olive oil and leave to rise for about 2 hours.

The dough should now be turned out in 3 pieces, one on each baking tray. Knock down and using floured hands, shape into the final slipper shape about 2.5 cm in depth. Sprinkle with flour and leave to rise for about 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown. Test by tapping the base to hear a hollow sound. Cool on a wire rack.

Ciabatta is baked too wet to knead and should have an open and airy structure with a chewy crust when baked.

