



Same-day focaccia

Recipe by Shannon Martinez

This is one of my most replicated recipes from social media. You can have creative freedom with the toppings. Make it as simple or intricate as you like.

INGREDIENTS

For the focaccia:

9 g (¼ oz) dry yeast (approx. 2½ teaspoons)
15 g (½ oz) agave or sugar
625 ml (21 fl oz/2½ cups) tepid water
160 g (5½ oz) wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour
500 g (1 lb 2 oz/3⅓ cup) 00 flour, or plain (all-purpose) flour
20 g (¾ oz) salt
60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing and drizzling

My favourite toppings:

2 garlic cloves, peeled
250 g (9 oz) cherry tomatoes
1 tablespoon capers, drained and rinsed
handful of basil leaves
handful of oregano leaves
1 teaspoon salt flakes



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DIRECTIONS

- Whisk together the yeast, agave and water, then set aside to bloom for 10 minutes. You want the mixture to become frothy. If it doesn't, your yeast is dead. Go buy more and start again!
- Add both flours and the salt to the bowl and mix everything together with a wooden spoon or spatula until you have a rough dough.
- Add the oil to another large bowl and drop in the dough. Turn it so it's coated in the oil, then pull up from one side and bring it over to the centre. Turn the bowl and pull again. Do this four times, then flip the dough and cover with a tea (dish) towel.
- Leave to prove in a warm place for at least 2 hours, or until the dough has almost doubled in size. Once proved, knock the dough back by punching the air out then repeat the folding process.
- Heavily coat a high-sided baking tray with oil, then drop the dough in.
- Gently stretch the dough to roughly fit the shape of the tray, then cover. Leave to prove in a warm place for 1 hour.
- While the dough is proving, prepare your topping. If using my favourite topping (see ingredients), add all ingredients to a mortar and pestle and grind into a chunky pulp. This can also be done in a food processor or even by just chopping with a knife.
- Once the dough has risen in the tray, pour the topping over the dough and press it all over with your fingertips. Cover and prove for a final 30 minutes.
- While the dough is proving, preheat the oven to 220 °C (430 °F).
- The dough is ready to bake when you can see large bubbles forming on the surface.
- Sprinkle with the salt flakes and bake for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown and crispy on top.
- Remove from the oven and drizzle with more olive oil.
- Allow to cool in the tray for 20 minutes before removing, then leave to cool to room temperature before cutting.



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Pastina

Recipe by Shannon Martinez

Most people have heard of Jewish penicillin, but the Italians also have a cure. Pastina is much easier to eat while horizontal than the Jewish variety.

INGREDIENTS

1.2 litres (41 fl oz) vegan chicken stock

or Brodo (page 104)

200 g (7 oz) pastina (tiny star-shaped pasta)

125 ml (4 fl oz/½ cup) soy milk (optional)

50 g (1¾ oz) vegan butter

50 g (1¾ oz/½ cup) grated vegan

parmesan, plus extra to serve

drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil

fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

- Pour the stock into a large saucepan and bring to the boil over a high heat.
- Once boiling, pour in the pastina and stir well. Turn down the heat to medium and simmer, stirring the pasta continuously, until the stock is barely covering the pasta and the pasta is cooked through. Add the soy milk (if using), with the butter and parmesan, then beat through till combined. It should look more like a risotto than a soup.
- Take off the heat, then season to taste with plenty of salt and pepper. Serve in bowls drizzled with olive oil, a squeeze of lemon juice and extra parmesan.



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Ricotta

Recipe by Shannon Martinez

We've come a long way in the vegan cheese world in the last five years, but the good cheeses are still few and far between – and I say that living in a major city. So, I wanted to give you a fail-safe ricotta recipe that you can access 24/7 using ingredients you can even find at a gas station.

INGREDIENTS

1 litre (34 fl oz/4 cups) soy milk
1 teaspoon salt flakes
a few cracks of white pepper
60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) white-wine vinegar
extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
(optional)
sea salt flakes, to taste (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- Heat the soy milk in a saucepan over a medium heat until bubbles begin to form around the side of the pan – don't let it simmer or boil. Turn off the heat, add the salt and pepper and slowly pour in the vinegar.
- Gently pass a spatula or spoon through the milk only a few times. Leave to sit for 1 hour.
- Line a sieve with a piece of muslin (cheesecloth), or any thin cloth, and set the sieve over a bowl. Pour the milk into the sieve, then refrigerate and leave to drain for at least 12 hours, preferably overnight.
- Remove the ricotta from the cloth and store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days.



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