

Sourdough Herby Fougasse

Fougasse is a leaf-shaped and scored flatbread. It is another way to use sourdough, by stretching and shaping and scoring the dough and baking it to a thinner, crunchy finish. Part of the fun of making fougasse is creating the shape and cuts in the dough. This does not need to follow a standard pattern; you can get as creative as you like! I have added dried rosemary to this dough; it can be replaced with another herb of your choice, or left out completely.

30 g (1/4 cup) active starter

210 g (3/4 cup plus 2 tbsp) water

300 g (2 1/2 cups) strong white bread flour

20 g (1 tbsp) olive oil, plus more for drizzling (optional)

2 g (2 tsp) dried rosemary

3.5 g (1/2 tsp) salt, or to taste

Rice flour or ground semolina, for dusting

NOTE: After the main or overnight proof, if you would like to bake the dough later in the day, place the bowl of proofed, untouched, still covered, in the fridge to halt any more growth. When you are ready to use the dough, take it from the fridge, allow it to warm up, then continue from Step 5.

PREP: Feed your starter to generate the 30 grams (1/4 cup) of active starter needed for the recipe. For the second proofing and baking, have ready two large baking or cookie sheets lined with parchment paper.

Makes 2 fougasse

Step 1: In the early evening, in a large mixing bowl, roughly mix together all the ingredients, except the rice flour or semolina, until you have a shaggy, rough dough. You will be able to see the oil in the dough; this will mix through over the next couple of steps. Cover the bowl with a clean shower cap or your choice of cover and leave the bowl on the counter for 1 hour.

Step 2: After an hour or so, perform the first set of pulls and folds until the dough comes together into a soft ball; it will be stretchy, silky and aromatic. Cover the bowl again and leave it on your counter.

Step 3: Over the next few hours, do three more sets of pulls and folds on the dough, covering the dough after each set. Perform the final set before going to bed.

Step 4: Leave the covered bowl on the counter overnight, typically 8 to 10 hours, at 64 to 68°F (18 to 20°C).

Step 5: In the morning, the dough will have grown to double, almost triple in size.

Sprinkle the paper lining of your prepared baking sheets with rice flour or ground semolina. Next, sprinkle your counter generously with rice flour. Gently turn your dough out from the bowl onto the counter. Cut it equally, by eye, into two pieces.

(continued)



Using the same pulls and folds method, pull each portion of dough into a soft parcel, then turn one half over into itself and roll it gently into a plump sausage. Use your fingertips to pull and push the pieces of dough into a 12 x 8-inch (30 x 20-cm) oval. The dough will want to bounce back and resist being stretched; if that is the case, allow it to rest for 5 to 10 minutes, then continue to stretch it. Carefully lift each piece and place it on a prepared baking sheet. Using a pizza cutter, cut one line down the middle of the dough and shorter diagonal cuts on either side to represent a leaf design. Cover the pan with a large plastic bag and leave on the counter to proof again for 2 to 3 hours, or until the dough has puffed up to double the thickness.

Step 6: To bake, preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C) convection or 425°F (220°C) conventional. Drizzle lightly with olive oil. Bake uncovered for 18 to 20 minutes, or until browned.

Step 7: Once baked, allow to cool briefly before eating.