

Whole Wheat(ish) Pita Bread

(Recipe source *The Gourmet Cookbook*, published in *Gourmet* May 2003)

Ingredients:

1 (1/4-ounce) package active dry yeast (2 1/2 teaspoons)
1 teaspoon honey
1 1/4 cups warm water (105–115 degrees F), divided
2 cups bread flour or high-gluten flour, plus additional for kneading
1 cup whole-wheat flour
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
Cornmeal for sprinkling baking sheets

Directions:

In a large bowl (or the bowl of a stand mixer if using), stir together yeast, honey and 1/2 cup warm water. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. If mixture does not foam, start over with new yeast.

While yeast mixture stands, stir together flours in another bowl. Whisk 1/2 cup flour mixture into yeast mixture until smooth. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand in a draft-free/warm place (I like to use my oven - I turn it on for about a minute to get it warm - about 80-82 degrees and then turn it off and place dough in oven) until doubled in bulk and bubbly, about 45 minutes.

Stir in oil, salt, remaining 3/4 cup warm water and remaining 2 1/2 cups flour mixture until a dough forms. Either turn dough out onto a floured surface and knead, working in just enough flour to keep dough from sticking, or use a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook and on low speed to knead until dough is smooth and elastic, about 8-10 minutes.

Form dough into a ball and place in a large oiled bowl, turning once to coat. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let dough rise in draft-free/warm place until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

Prepare 2 baking sheets by sprinkling with cornmeal. Punch down dough and cut into 8 pieces. Form each piece into a ball, flatten the ball and then roll out into a 7-inch round on floured surface with a floured rolling pin. Transfer round to prepared baking sheet. Make 7 more rounds in same manner, arranging them on baking sheets. Loosely cover pitas with clean kitchen towels (not terry cloth) and let stand at room temperature 30 minutes.

Adjust oven rack to the lower third of oven and remove other racks (I left the other racks). Preheat oven to 500 degrees. Transfer 4 pitas, 1 at a time, directly onto oven rack (alternatively, I think you could bake these on a preheated baking stone so they don't get wire marks from the oven). Bake until puffed and pale golden, about 2 minutes. Turn over with tongs and bake 1 minute more.

Cool pitas on a cooling rack 2 minutes, then stack and wrap loosely in a kitchen towel to keep pitas warm. Bake remaining 4 pitas in same manner. Serve warm.

Yield: 8 pitas