KITCHENART
THE STORE FOR COOKS

Homemade Pita Bread
Makes 8

Fresh, warm pita bread is hard to beat! Achieving a fully puffed pita pocket might take some practice, but we found that even with flatbreads that puffed only slightly could easily be coaxed open into pockets with a knife. For maximum "puffiness," work with the dough gently, and make sure the skillet is very hot before cooking each pita bread.

Ingredients:
1 cup warm water
1 packet active yeast, or 2-1/4 teaspoons
2-1/2 to 3 cups flour
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon sugar
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for oiling bowl

Directions:
1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, pour in the warm water and sprinkle the yeast on top. Allow the yeast to hydrate and bloom by leaving undisturbed for 2-3 minutes.

2. Add one cup of flour and the sugar to the yeast and water. Mix on low speed with the paddle attachment for about 1 minute or until evenly combined. Let the beginning batter stand for about 20 minutes for further yeast development.

3. After this rest, many bubbles will have formed. Add the salt and olive oil to the batter. On low speed, slowly add an additional 1-1/2 cups of the flour.

4. Continue to mix and add 2-4 tablespoons of additional flour until a soft dough ball has formed. The dough should be "springy," and not too sticky.

5. Remove the dough from the mixer and knead on a lightly floured surface until the dough forms a nice, well-rounded ball.

6. Clean the mixing bowl, then drizzle a little olive oil and coat the inside of the bowl. Place the dough into the bowl, turn it to coat all surfaces with the olive oil. Cover, and let rise for 2 hours or until doubled in size.

7. Remove the risen dough from the bowl, and pat into a flat disk. Divide the disk into 8 equal sections with a dough cutter or large chef's knife.

8. Form each section into it's own small ball by folding the dough under the bottom until a neat ball has been formed.

Page 2, continued

9. Place the 8 individual balls on a lightly floured surface and cover with plastic wrap for 30 minutes and let rise again.

10. Once the individual dough balls have risen, remove a single ball and gently roll into a 8" circle, or until the dough is about 1/4" thick.

11. Preheat a well-oiled cast-iron pan on the stovetop over medium-high heat.

12. Place the rolled out dough pieces in the heated pan, and watch it puff up. Turn until each side is slightly golden, about 3 minutes per side.

13. Serve as a pita pocket by cutting in half, using a knife to coax open the pita if necessary. Or, cut the pita into 6 wedges. Be patient -- if not every pita puffs up or creates a pocket, that's ok -- fresh pita bread cut into wedges is still quite a treat!