

# **PITA (ISRAELI FLAT BREAD)**

**[SIX SMALL ROUND LOAVES]**

These small packets come out of the oven ready to receive a sandwich filling. Light brown and puffed in the center, Israeli flat breads will be crusty and hard when they are put on the rack to cool but will soon soften. Simply tear open and spread with butter and/or sandwich material.

It is a simple creation—water, flour, salt, and yeast.

## **INGREDIENTS**

1 package dry yeast

1¼ cups warm water (105°–115°)

3 to 4 cups all-purpose or bread flour, approximately

2 teaspoons salt

## **BAKING SHEET**

One baking sheet, greased or Teflon.

**PREPARATION**  
10 mins.

In a mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in the warm water. Stir in 2 cups of flour and the salt. Beat with 50 vigorous strokes. Add additional flour, a half-cup at a time, first with the spoon and then using your hands, until a rough, shaggy mass is formed.

**KNEADING**  
8 mins.

Turn onto a lightly floured work surface—counter top or bread board—and knead with a rhythmic 1-2-3 motion until the dough is soft, satiny and feels alive under the hands. Knead for 8 minutes altogether or 6 minutes with the dough hook.

**SHAPING**  
12 mins.

Divide the dough into six pieces and form each into a round ball. Flatten with a rolling pin. Each should be about 4 to 5 inches in diameter and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick.

**RISING**  
45 mins.

Cluster the loaves on the work surface and cover with a towel or wax paper. Leave them for 45 minutes, or until slightly puffed.

**BAKING**  
500°  
15-18 mins.

Preheat oven to 500°. Turn the rounds over (upside down) onto the baking sheet and place in the oven for 15 to 18 minutes, or until they are light brown and puffed in the center.

**FINAL STEP**

Place on wire rack to cool. The breads will be hard when they are removed from the oven but the crusts will soften and flatten as they cool. These should be served within a day or so since they soon lose their freshness. They freeze well, however.