

Naan

MAKES 10

x2



Ingredients

1½ teaspoons instant dried yeast

1½ teaspoons sugar

250 ml (1 cup) warm water

450 g (3 cups) plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 teaspoon salt

90 g clarified butter or ghee (see page 207)

3 tablespoons plain yoghurt

Olive oil or vegetable oil

2 ~~teaspoons~~ sesame seeds

Naan is a leavened Indian flatbread that is fancier than unleavened chapatis, and often has a filling. Naan is usually made with yoghurt and ghee or oil as well as yeast, and some recipes include an egg. Traditionally, naan is cooked in an Indian tandoor – a large urn-shaped oven, often made from clay – but it can be made successfully in your kitchen.

There is an art to eating naan with Indian dishes, and a right and wrong way. Tear strips of naan using your right hand, wrap the strip around some meat or vegetables in your dish, then eat the whole thing in one scoop. Never use your left hand.

I have broken my own rule as far as long-proving goes with this recipe – you will need 1½ hours. But naan is so delicious that I know home cooks will want to give it a go, even if the time factor makes it difficult for a class. These are delicious stuffed with the traditional spiced potato stuffing on page 202.

In a small bowl, combine the yeast, sugar and water and stir until the yeast has dissolved. Leave for 10 minutes until frothy. *Add 3 Tbsp ghee*

Put the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl and mix to combine. Add the liquid, ~~half the ghee~~ and the yoghurt and use your fingers or a fork to mix to a soft dough. Tip onto a well-floured work surface and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. Grease another bowl with a few drops of oil, then put the dough in. Cover tightly and allow to prove for 1½ hours until doubled in size.

Punch down the dough, tip out onto the floured work surface and knead again for 4–5 minutes. Divide into 10 pieces and shape each piece into a ball. Lightly roll out a ball, then stretch and pat into a circle or oval about 10–12 cm in diameter. Repeat with the remaining balls.

Preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan-forced). Line two baking trays with foil and brush with a few drops of oil. Melt the remaining ghee. Arrange the shaped naan on the trays without touching (you will probably need to cook them in two or three batches). Brush each naan generously with the melted ghee and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Bake for about 10 minutes until the naan puff and start to brown. Carefully turn them and bake for a further 3–4 minutes. Transfer the cooked naan to a napkin or foil-lined bread basket, then cook the next batch.

Cooked, cooled naan can be stored in an airtight bag in the refrigerator for about 3 days. They can also be frozen. To use, simply sprinkle with a little olive oil, and heat them straight from the refrigerator or, if frozen, allow to thaw before heating in a 180°C (160°C fan-forced) oven for about 10 minutes.

Swap

For garlic naan, finely chop a clove of garlic and mix it with the extra ghee for brushing on the naan.