

Homemade bread sticks worth the effort

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TENDER SALTY BREAD STICKS

3 cups unbleached all purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons salt
1 cup warm water (95-105 degrees F.)
2 1/2 teaspoons bakers yeast
2 tablespoons unsalted butter or olive oil

Egg wash made by beating 1 large egg with 1 tablespoon water
2 tablespoons Kosher salt for sprinkling

In a bowl, mix together the flour, sugar and salt. In a small bowl, whisk together the water, yeast, and butter or oil. Add yeast mixture to flour mixture and work into a dough.

Place dough on a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 8-10 minutes. Place dough in a lightly greased bowl, turning to coat, and let rise,

covered lightly with plastic wrap, until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

Line two jelly roll pans or large baking sheets with parchment paper or foil. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and punch down. Shape dough into a 12 by 3-inch rectangle and cut crosswise into twelve 3 by 1-inch strips. Roll each strip with palms of hands until six inches long and in the pans arrange 2 inches apart. Cover pans loosely with plastic wrap or a kitchen towel and let sticks rise until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Brush sticks with egg wash and sprinkle with Kosher salt. Bake sticks in upper and lower thirds of the oven, switching positions of pans halfway through baking, until well risen and golden, about 20-25 minutes. Cool sticks in pans on racks. Makes 12 somewhat large bread sticks.

CLASSIC ITALIAN GRISSINI

2 scant tablespoons dry bakers yeast

2 1/2 cups warm water (about 105 degrees F.)
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons honey
2 teaspoons salt
5 1/2 to 6 1/2 cups unbleached flour
Sesame seeds, poppy seeds, caraway seeds, coarse salt or a combination, if desired, for a topping.

In a large bowl, soften the yeast by dissolving it in the water. Add the oil, honey, salt and 2 cups of the flour. Beat vigorously with a dough whisk or a heavy handled spoon for 2 minutes. Gradually add more of the remaining flour, 1/4 cup at a time, until the dough forms a mass and begins to pull away from the side of the bowl. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead the dough, adding more flour, a little at a time, for 8-10 minutes or until you have a smooth, elastic dough and blisters begin to develop on the surface.

Place the dough in an oiled bowl. Cover with kitchen towels and allow to rise for 1 hour or until

doubled in size. Turn the dough onto a lightly oiled surface. Divide into 48 pieces for thick bread sticks or 72 pieces in you prefer the more classic, thin Italian Gristini. Roll each piece into a 10 inch rope.

If desired, scatter one or more of the toppings over the work surface. Place the bread sticks one inch apart on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Cover with a towel and allow to rise for 30 minutes. About 15 minutes before the end of the second rise,

preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Bake thicker bread sticks for 20 minutes, thinner bread sticks for 10-12 minutes. Immediately remove bread sticks from the baking sheets to a rack.

For extra crisp bread sticks, cool the oven to 200 degrees F. and place the bread sticks in the oven for 20 minutes more. Makes 48 or 72 bread sticks, depending on their size.

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