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# Bread

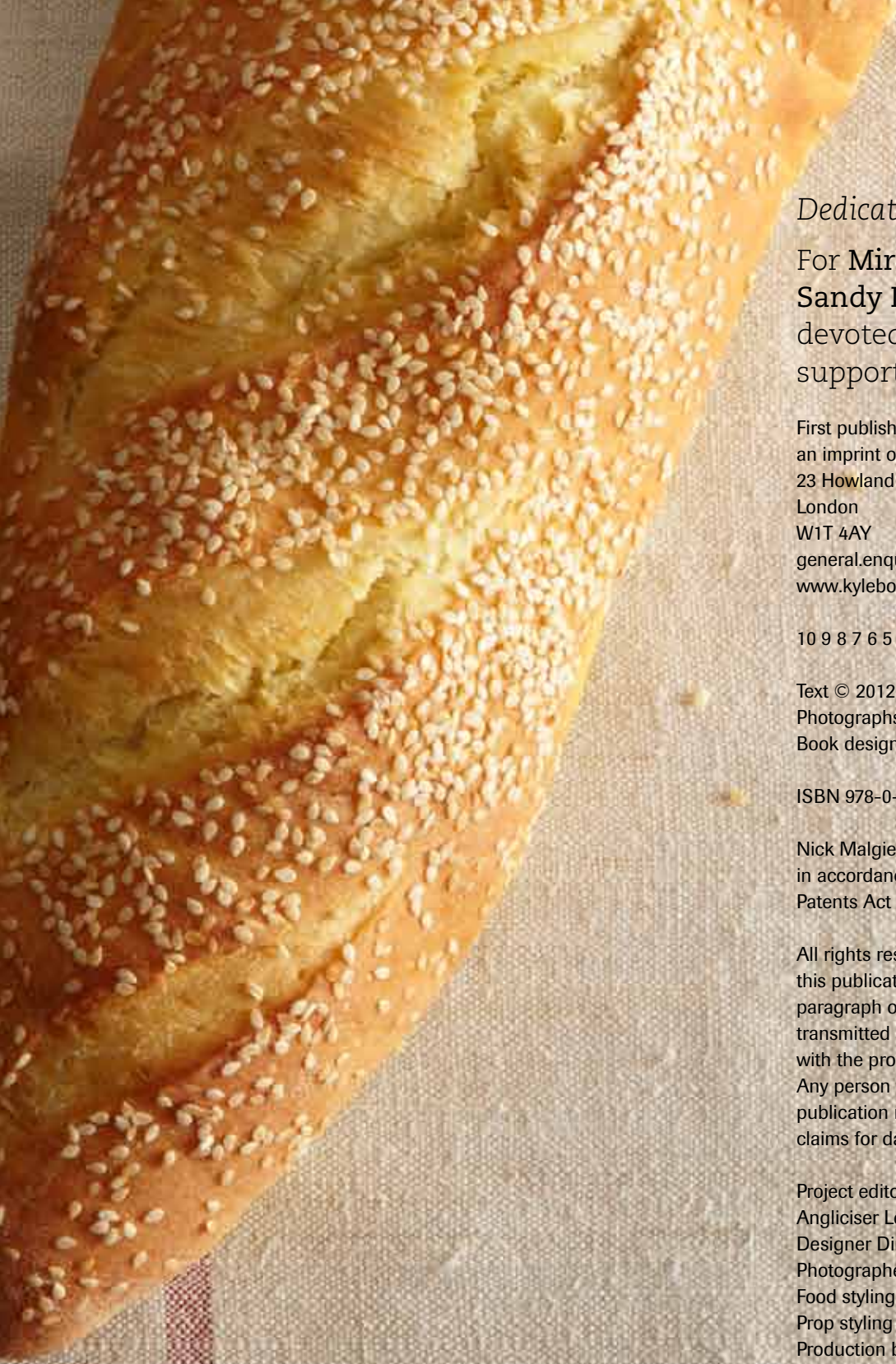
Written by Nick Malgieri

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### *Dedication*

For Miriam Brickman, Kyra Effren,  
Sandy Leonard, and Nancy Nicholas,  
devoted friends whose kindness and  
support are endless.

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Angliciser Lee Faber  
Designer Dirk Kaufman  
Photographer Romulo Yanes  
Food styling Paul Grimes  
Prop styling Megan Hedgpeth  
Production by Gemma John & Nic Jones

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## chapter four

# Slow-Rise Breads

If you have a patient nature, slow-rise breads will appeal to you. They're made from doughs that just need to be mixed together with a rubber spatula and left to rise at room temperature for 8–12 hours. After that, they're given a couple of turns, and you're off and running to shape your loaf, proof it and bake it.

The small amount of yeast used and the long rising time result in a dough that bakes up to a flavourful loaf. And unlike some slow-rise breads that are made from doughs so soft that they're a nightmare to handle, the doughs in this chapter have enough body to make shaping easy.

Slow-rise bread came into the spotlight several years ago, when food writer Mark Bittman did a story and recipe in *The New York Times* about New York baker Jim Lahey's bread, which is baked in a preheated and covered enamelled iron Dutch oven. Many adaptations have been published in bread books since that story appeared. When I spoke to Jim about it before starting this book, he would only acknowledge that he was flattered by the imitations of his method. I'm not providing that recipe here, mainly because *The New York Times* story is easy enough to find online, but I do include instructions for using a pizza stone to bake single loaves of the breads that follow.

The savoury bread puddings that follow the bread recipes are one of the most flavourful uses for leftover or stale bread of any kind. Bread puddings made from diced bread have all the ingredients evenly dispersed throughout the mixture, while those made from slices of bread are layered and are called *strata*. A pudding made from diced bread absorbs the custard more easily and is quickly ready for the oven; layers of sliced bread and other ingredients take longer to absorb the custard and are often chilled overnight to ensure even moistening. If you prefer a very crisp top crust, use firm bread, like the breads in this chapter. If you want a more gentle crunch, use a more tender bread, such as the sandwich breads in Chapter 5.

The main difference between slow-rise bread and other simple breads that are made with flour, water, yeast and salt lies in the fact that it needs only a little mixing; the long rising time develops all the gluten needed to make the dough smooth and elastic. It's among the easiest types of bread to make if you're careful to use plenty of flour on the work surface and your hands when shaping it, as the dough is soft and sticky.

*Makes one round loaf, about 23cm in diameter*  
255g room-temperature tap water, about 24°C  
½ teaspoon fine granulated active dried yeast or instant yeast  
340g strong white bread flour  
3 tablespoons chopped rosemary leaves, optional  
1 teaspoon fine sea salt  
One heavy baking sheet or pizza pan lined with sprayed or lightly oiled parchment paper, plus a spray bottle filled with warm water

## QUICK CHANGES

### EASIEST SLOW-RISE CIABATTA:

- Prepare Easiest Slow-Rise Bread to the end of step 5, preheating a baking stone at the same time.
- Pull the dough, without deflating it, to a rectangle about 15 x 20cm.
- Use an oiled bench scraper to cut it into two rectangles, each 15 x 10cm. Gently transfer the loaves to a piece of lightly oiled parchment paper that will fit your baking stone and cover with a flat-weave towel. Proof until the loaves puff, about 1 hour – they will not double in bulk.
- Spray with water and slide the loaves onto the stone. Resume the recipe at step 8. Once you get to step 9, the additional baking time should be 15–20 minutes.

1. Pour the water into a 3-litre or slightly larger mixing bowl and whisk in the yeast. Wait 30 seconds, then whisk again.
2. Combine the flour, rosemary, if using and salt and use a large rubber spatula to stir them into the liquid. Scrape the side of the bowl to make sure that no flour remains stuck there. Once the dough is a coherent mass, beat it for a few seconds.
3. Cover with clingfilm and let the dough ferment at room temperature for at least 8 hours, until more than doubled in bulk.

4. 2 hours before you are ready to form and bake the bread, use a plastic scraper to transfer the dough from the bowl to a well-floured work surface. See step 6, page 28, but let rest for 1 hour.
5. Set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 230°C/gas mark 8.
6. Use a scraper to invert the dough to a floured work surface and pull the sides of the dough in towards the centre to give the loaf a round shape, pinching the pulled-in pieces in place at the top. Invert the dough

## USING A PIZZA STONE

Pizza or baking stones are a convenient tool to rig up a home oven to simulate baking directly on the hearth of a baker's oven. Made from a clay-stone composite, they come in a variety of sizes and shapes, but make sure to buy one that's about 5mm thick for maximum heat retention. Follow the manufacturer's directions for seasoning the stone, if required.

To bake any of the breads in this chapter on a pizza stone instead of a baking sheet, position on a rack below the middle level of the oven and preheat for at least 30 minutes at a temperature 20 degrees higher than the baking temperature required for the bread.

You can use a baker's peel or just a piece of stiff cardboard to transfer a risen loaf to the preheated stone. If you've never done this before, by all means practise the movement a few times while the stone is in place but before you've preheated the oven.

For added convenience, proof the loaf directly on a piece of lightly oiled parchment paper on the peel, cut to a size just a little larger all around than the loaf to minimise bits of burnt paper in the oven. Yes, the paper will probably burn, but that won't affect the taste of the bread. If you've proofed the loaf upside down in a banneton or cloth-lined basket, cover it with a piece of oiled paper, then with the peel, and invert, removing the banneton.

To slide the loaf onto the stone, position the far end of the peel at the far end of the stone. Angle the peel downward at 15–20 degrees and quickly jerk it away, leaving the loaf on the stone. If the recipe requires spraying the loaf with water while it's baking, make sure to use hot water and to aim for the loaf, as occasionally a stone will crack if sprayed.

You may also substitute a heavy-duty baking sheet or an overturned swiss roll tin for a pizza stone.

into a floured banneton (as in the photo) or a basket lined with a floured cloth and cover with a tea towel. Proof the loaf until it puffs, about 1 hour – it will not double in bulk.

7. Invert the paper-lined baking sheet onto the banneton and flip the banneton over onto the sheet and remove it. Use an X-Acto knife or a single-edge razor blade to cut a slash across the diameter of the loaf. Generously spray with water and place the pan in the oven.

8. Wait 5 minutes and spray again, then decrease the oven temperature to 220°C/gas mark 7. Bake the loaf until it is deep golden and the internal temperature reads 93°C on an instant read thermometer, 25–35 minutes.

9. Cool the loaf on a rack and keep loosely covered at room temperature on the day it's baked. Wrap and freeze for longer storage. Reheat at 180°C/gas mark 4 for 5 minutes and cool before serving.



Makes one 25–30cm loaf

375g room-temperature tap water, about 24°C

½ teaspoon fine granulated active dried yeast or instant yeast

500g strong white bread flour

1½ teaspoons fine sea salt

200g Niçoise olives, or other firm-textured black olives, pitted after weighing and coarsely chopped, see Note

One heavy baking sheet or pizza pan lined with sprayed or lightly oiled parchment paper, plus a spray bottle filled with warm water

Olives are a natural complement to bread, especially when they're baked inside it. Be sure to buy firm unpitted olives for this – pitted olives tend to be softer, and though buying them that way may save you time, the olives will disintegrate and add extra moisture to the dough.

1. Pour the water into a 3-litre or slightly larger mixing bowl and whisk in the yeast. Wait 30 seconds, then whisk again.

2. Combine the flour and salt and use a large rubber spatula to stir the flour mixture into the liquid. Scrape the side of the bowl to make sure that no flour remains stuck there. Once the dough is a coherent mass, beat it for a few seconds. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and let the dough ferment at room temperature for at least 8 hours. It will more than double in bulk.

3. A couple of hours before you are ready to form and bake the bread, use a plastic scraper to transfer the dough from the bowl to a well-floured work surface. Flour your hands and pull the dough into a long rectangle. Scatter the olives over half the length of the dough, then fold the other half of the dough over them. Gently press to stick the dough back together. Fold the two sides in to overlap at the middle, then roll the top towards you all the way to the end, swiss roll-style. Invert, flatten and repeat. Move the dough to a well-floured place and cover with a tea towel or sprayed or oiled clingfilm; let rest for 1 hour.

4. Set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 230°C/gas mark 8.

5. Use a scraper to invert the dough to a floured work surface and pull the sides of the dough in towards the centre to give the loaf a round shape, pinching the pulled-in pieces in place at the top. Invert the dough to a floured banneton or a basket lined with a floured cloth and cover it with a flat-weave tea towel. Proof the loaf until it puffs visibly, about 1 hour – it will not double in bulk.

6. Invert the paper-lined baking sheet onto the banneton and flip the banneton over onto the sheet and remove it. Use an X-Acto knife or a single-edge razor blade to cut a slash across the diameter of the loaf. Spray the loaf with water and place it in the oven.

7. Wait 5 minutes and spray again, then decrease the oven temperature to 220°C/gas mark 7.

8. Bake the loaf until it is deep golden and the internal temperature reads 93°C on an instant read thermometer, 30–40 minutes. Cool the loaf on a rack.

*NOTE: Niçoise olives are too small to be pitted using a cherry or olive stoner. Smash the olives, a few at a time, with the side of a knife blade, then carefully pick through to separate them from the stones. If you can't find real Niçoise olives, substitute Kalamata olives or Moroccan oil-cured olives for them.*

Many flavourful Italian and other European breads are made from white flour that doesn't have all the bran removed, resulting in a slightly darker crumb after baking. The heavy coating of sesame seeds on this bread recalls the bread from the Italian bakeries of my childhood. A mix of white and black sesame seeds, all poppy seeds, or no seeds at all would be equally good with this bread.

1. Pour the water into a 3-litre or slightly larger mixing bowl and whisk in the yeast. Wait 30 seconds, then whisk again.

2. Combine the flours and salt and use a large rubber spatula to stir the flour mixture into the liquid. Scrape the side of the bowl to make sure that no flour remains stuck there. Once the dough is a coherent mass, beat it for a few seconds. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and let the dough ferment at room temperature for at least 8 hours. It will more than double in bulk.

3. A couple of hours before you are ready to form and bake the bread, use a plastic scraper to remove the dough from the bowl to a well-floured work surface. See step 6, page 28. Flour a small area on the work surface and set the dough on it, cover with a towel or sprayed or oiled clingfilm, and let rest for 1 hour.

4. Set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 230°C/gas mark 8.

5. Use a scraper to invert the dough onto a floured work surface and pull the sides of the dough in towards the centre to give the

loaf a round shape, pinching the pulled-in pieces in place at the top. Invert the dough to a floured banneton or a basket lined with a floured cloth and cover it with a flat-weave tea towel. Proof the loaf until it puffs visibly, about 1 hour – it will not double in bulk.

6. Invert the paper-lined baking sheet onto the banneton and flip the banneton over onto the sheet and remove it. Use an X-Acto knife or a single-edge razor blade to cut a slash across the diameter of the loaf. Spray with water and generously sprinkle with sesame seeds. Place in the oven.

7. Wait 5 minutes and spray again, then decrease the oven temperature to 220°C/gas mark 7.

8. Bake the loaf until it is deep golden and the internal temperature reads 93°C on an instant read thermometer, 30–40 minutes. Cool the loaf on a rack.

Makes one 25cm diameter round loaf

375g room-temperature tap water, about 24°C

½ teaspoon fine granulated active dried yeast or instant yeast

400g strong white bread flour

100g wholemeal flour

1½ teaspoons fine sea salt

60g white (untoasted) sesame seeds

Maize meal for the baking sheet

One heavy baking sheet or pizza pan lined with sprayed or lightly oiled parchment, plus a spray bottle filled with warm water

Makes about 6 servings

4–6 medium poblano chilli peppers, about 675g, rinsed, halved, stems and seed pods removed

3 ears sweetcorn, husked

600ml whole milk

4 medium eggs

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

55g unsalted butter, melted

4 medium spring onions, trimmed to 12.5cm long, green ends discarded, cut into 5mm pieces

15g coarsely chopped fresh coriander

225g Mexican *queso fresco* or sharp Cheddar, coarsely grated

6–8 x 1cm slices Easiest Slow-Rise Bread, page 48, or other mild-flavoured bread

One 2.5 litre gratin or other baking dish

## MORE ABOUT STRATA

There are a few important points about making imaginative fillings for strata: All vegetables need to be cooked first so that they're tender and won't exude water into the filling. Stick to assertively flavoured vegetables like leeks, onions, broccoli, spinach, Swiss chard or asparagus. Avoid root vegetables like carrots, potatoes, and turnips, which soak up flavour without contributing much. Chopped herbs such as parsley or chives, or torn leaves of basil are great in moderation – 2–4 tablespoons are enough. A cupful of halved cherry tomatoes can be good, but if using larger tomatoes, bake them at 190°C/gas mark 5 for about 30 minutes on a tin covered with oiled parchment paper to rid them of excess water. Don't overdo it: 300–400g of filling is plenty.

Strata, the plural of the Latin *stratum*, means layers. Breakfast strata is an easy and delicious breakfast or brunch main course. A baking dish holds two layers of bread slices with a filling between them. A savoury custard is poured over and the dish is covered and refrigerated overnight so that the custard fully penetrates. Next morning, all you have to do is bake it. Try to use a metal or enamelled iron baking dish that can go straight from the refrigerator to the oven. If all you have is a glass or porcelain dish, remove it from the refrigerator 1 hour before baking. Use any bread you like, and if it isn't really thick-crust you don't even have to remove the crust. The important thing is to patch together a full, even layer of bread slices both under and over the filling. This recipe uses some classic Mexican flavours and ingredients, but breakfast strata is a very versatile dish, so see the box for other filling suggestions.

1. Set the chillies under the grill and cook until they start to form charred blisters, about 5 minutes. Use tongs to turn the chillies and cook for 5 minutes on the other side. Repeat, turning the chillies skin side up again and letting them char evenly.
2. Transfer the chilli halves to a bowl and cover with clingfilm; let steam for 5 minutes. Remove the charred skin from each chilli and cut them into 5mm strips. Set aside.
3. Bring a pan of water to the boil, salt it and add the sweetcorn. Return to the boil and cook for 5 minutes. Remove the corn and let cool. Stand an ear of corn upright and use a sharp knife to cut away the kernels. Over a bowl, use the back of the knife to scrape the cut surface for any remaining bits of corn.
4. Whisk the milk, eggs, salt, pepper and nutmeg together.
5. To assemble, brush the inside of the baking dish with some of the butter and arrange half the bread slices in an even layer, patching with any scraps or odd pieces if necessary. Sprinkle half the remaining butter on the bread.
6. Evenly pour about a quarter of the milk mixture over the bread slices. Scatter the sliced chillies, corn, spring onions, coriander and three quarters of the cheese over the soaked bread. Pour on another quarter of the milk mixture.
7. Cover with the remaining bread slices to form an even layer. Evenly pour the remaining milk mixture over the top layer of bread. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and butter. Cover with clingfilm and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight.
8. About 30 minutes before you want to bake the strata, set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 180°C/gas mark 4.
9. Bake the strata until the top is well browned and the filling is set and no longer liquid, 60–70 minutes.
10. Cool for 5 minutes before serving directly from the baking dish.



Makes about 6 generous servings

300g cubed bread, such as Easiest Slow-Rise Bread, page 48, or Italian Sesame Loaf, page 51, with or without crusts

720ml whole milk

3 medium eggs

½ teaspoon fine sea salt or table salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

140g coarsely grated sharp cheddar

340g grape or cherry tomatoes, halved

One 20–23cm gratin dish or other baking dish, well buttered

**M**aking a great bread pudding, either savoury or sweet, depends on two things: getting the cubes of bread sufficiently dry so that they easily soak up the liquid in the recipe and giving them time to do so by adding the liquid in stages. Like most savoury bread puddings, this is also an excellent side dish with simply grilled or roasted chicken or turkey.

1. Set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 180°C/gas mark 4. and all of the tomatoes. Scrape the mixture into the prepared baking dish. Pour over the rest of the milk mixture, then top with the remaining grated cheese. Let rest for 10 to 15 minutes before baking.
2. Scatter the bread cubes on a swiss roll tin and bake for about 15 minutes to dry them.
3. Meanwhile, whisk the milk with the eggs, salt, pepper and nutmeg.
4. Put the warm bread cubes in a large mixing bowl and fold in half the milk mixture, followed by three-quarters of the cheese
5. Bake the pudding until it is set and the top has browned nicely, 45–55 minutes.
6. Cool on a rack for 5 minutes, then serve hot from the baking dish.

## QUICK CHANGES

Add-ins: thinly slice a 55-85g link of cooked Italian or other sausage or 2 links of smaller breakfast sausages and add along with the cheese and tomatoes in step 4; replace the sausage with 115g bacon cut into 5mm dice, cooked and drained.

- Add 3–4 tablespoons finely snipped chives and fold them into the bread cubes before adding the liquid. Replace the chives with or also add 3–4 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley.

TOMATO AND BASIL BREAD PUDDING: Substitute 140g finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano for the Cheddar. Add 15g torn basil leaves with the tomatoes. Scatter 20g more grated Parmigiano Reggiano on top before baking.

**R**amequin, a speciality of the western French-speaking part of Switzerland, approaches constructing a bread pudding in an unusual way. Slices of bread and cheese, cut to the same size and thickness, are slanted and overlapped in a baking dish and a light custard mixture is poured over them. While this is usually made with a white sandwich bread like the ones in Chapter 5, I like using more porous breads, like the ones in this chapter.

1. Set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 190°C/gas mark 5.
2. In a rectangular dish, arrange 2 bread slices side by side at the far narrow end. Top each with a slice of cheese. Place 2 more slices of bread into the dish, about 4–5cm in from the edge so that they partially overlap the first slices. Top with cheese, then position the last two slices of bread the same way, topping with the slices of cheese. In an oval dish, start with 1 slice, then add 2, then add 2 more, then add 1 at the end, so that the arrangement of the slices follows the shape of the dish.
3. Whisk together the milk, eggs, salt, and nutmeg and pour half over the bread and cheese and let it soak in for 5 minutes. Pour in the remaining milk mixture.
4. Set the baking dish in a larger tin and add 1cm of hot water to the larger tin. Place in the oven and decrease the temperature to 180°C/gas mark 4. Bake until the cheese is melted and nicely browned and the custard is set, 35–45 minutes. Use a small spoon to lift some of the bread in the centre of the pudding to make sure the centre isn't still liquid. If it is, continue baking for 5–10 minutes longer and check again.
5. Cool on a rack for 5 minutes, then serve immediately with some bacon or sausage for brunch or a green salad for lunch.

## swiss bread & cheese pudding

Makes 6 brunch or lunch servings

6 x 1cm slices Easiest Slow-Rise Bread, page 48, trimmed to 7.5 x 12.5cm

6 x 1cm slices Swiss Emmentaler or Gruyère cheese

600ml whole milk, scalded

3 medium eggs

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

One 2–2.5 litre gratin or other baking dish, buttered, set into a larger tin for baking



**G**reen vegetables and leafy greens are perfect in a moist and tender bread pudding like this. Use this master recipe that combines cooked spinach and Roquefort, or another blue-veined cheese, as a model for the Quick Changes below. If you decide to branch out from the suggestions here, always make sure the vegetables are cooked so that they don't exude excess water into the pudding as raw vegetables might. You may also add sausage, bacon or herbs as suggested in the Quick Changes on page 54.

1. Set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 180°C/gas mark 4.
2. Scatter the bread cubes on a swiss roll tin and bake for about 15 minutes to dry them.
3. Meanwhile, wring the water out of the thawed spinach a handful at a time.
4. Cook the onion in the butter over a low heat in a medium sauté pan until it's soft and translucent. Stir in the spinach and cook until the spinach is no longer watery, about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the double cream if you're feeling indulgent and cool slightly. Add the Roquefort.
5. Whisk the milk with the eggs, salt, pepper and nutmeg.
6. Put the warm bread cubes in a large mixing bowl and fold in half the milk mixture,

followed by the spinach mixture. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and pour over the rest of the milk mixture. Let the pudding rest for 10–15 minutes before baking.

7. Bake the pudding until it is set and the top has browned nicely, 45–55 minutes.

8. Cool on a rack for 5 minutes, then serve hot from the baking dish.

*NOTE: To use fresh spinach, rinse 450g baby spinach and put it in a large saucepan over a high heat. Once the water on the spinach starts to give off a little steam, cover the pan and steam the spinach until it's wilted and cooked through, about 5 minutes, checking several times that it isn't boiling dry. Drain and cool, then squeeze out the water and chop.*

#### QUICK CHANGES

##### ROASTED ASPARAGUS AND GRUYÈRE BREAD PUDDING:

- Trim 450g asparagus into 10cm lengths and soak for at least 20 minutes at a time in several changes of water to release any sand.
- Set a rack in the upper third of the oven and preheat to 230°C/gas mark 8.
- Drain the asparagus in a colander then roll them on kitchen paper to blot excess moisture. Arrange the asparagus on a swiss roll tin and add 1–2 tablespoons olive oil. Roll the asparagus around on the tin to coat evenly and bake, shaking the tin, so that they cook evenly, until cooked through and lightly charred, 10–15 minutes.
- Cool the asparagus and cut them into 5cm lengths.
- When assembling, substitute the asparagus for the spinach and 170g coarsely grated Swiss Gruyère for the Roquefort.

##### BROCCOLI AND CHEDDAR BREAD PUDDING:

- Cut a 675g head of broccoli into florets and cook them in boiling salted water until tender. Drain, cool and cut into smaller pieces if large.
- Substitute the cooked broccoli for the spinach and 170g coarsely grated sharp cheddar for the Roquefort.

*Makes about 6 generous servings*

300g cubed bread, such as Easiest Slow-Rise Bread, page 48, or Italian Sesame Loaf, page 51, with or without crusts

280g frozen spinach, thawed or fresh spinach (see Note)

½ white onion, chopped

30g butter

120ml double cream (optional)

170g Roquefort or other blue-veined cheese, crumbled

720ml whole milk

3 medium eggs

½ teaspoon fine sea salt or table salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

One 20–23cm gratin dish or other baking dish, well buttered



# Filled Breads

Filled breads are portable and delicious and in the case of all but the Neapolitan *calzone*, easy to prepare in advance. Like flatbreads, they're universal – I can't think of a place where they don't have at least one savoury dish wrapped in bread dough – while many cultures, especially in Asia, excel at producing all types of elaborately filled steamed, fried and baked dumplings.

The ones here are simple and practical, and aside from the plait on page 182, all are either turnovers or are baked in tins for easy unmoulding.

Most of the recipes have suggestions for elaborating on the filling, but you can also take off in any direction you like, as long as you keep one important rule in mind: when making a filled bread never use raw vegetables, meat or fish, which generate juices while steaming inside the dough. The juices prevent the interior dough from baking and your delicious filling will be surrounded with pasty unbaked dough.

If you like to picnic, filled breads are perfect – just bring some drinks, a knife, paper napkins and some fruit for dessert and you're ready to go.



Makes enough dough for 4 *calzoni* or 8 smaller ones  
 2 teaspoons fine granulated active dried yeast or instant yeast  
 450g room-temperature tap water, about 24°C  
 2 tablespoons olive oil  
 675g strong white bread flour  
 2 teaspoons fine sea salt



This is essentially the same dough I used for thin-crust pizza in *BAKE!*, and I'm really happy with the way it easily stretches to the round shape you need for making a *calzone*. The dough is soft, so I recommend pressing it out directly on a piece of parchment paper that you can easily transfer to the baking tin to avoid having to pick up the *calzone* once it's formed, which might stretch it out of shape. See the *calzone* recipe opposite for filling, assembling, and baking.

1. In the bowl of an electric mixer, whisk the yeast into the water, then whisk in the oil.
2. Use a rubber spatula to stir the flour into the liquid, scraping the side of the bowl and folding up any unmixed flour from the bottom of the bowl.
3. Mix on the lowest speed with the dough hook until the dough starts to pull away from the bowl. Stop, scrape and let rest for 10 minutes.
4. Sprinkle in the salt and start the mixer on medium speed and mix the dough until it is smooth and more elastic, about 2 minutes. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and let the dough ferment until halfway doubled in bulk, 20–30 minutes.
5. Scrape the dough onto a floured work surface and flatten to a disc. Fold the two sides in to overlap at the centre, then roll the top towards you all the way to the end, swiss roll-style. Invert, flatten and repeat. Oil a bowl, place the dough in the bowl seam side up, turn it over so that the top is oiled and let ferment until almost doubled. If you don't intend to bake the *calzoni* straight away, give the dough another turn, return it to the bowl seam side down, cover with oiled or sprayed clingfilm and refrigerate for up to 24 hours before using.
6. When you're ready to make the *calzoni*, scrape the risen dough onto a floured work surface. Use a bench scraper to divide the

dough into 4 equal pieces. Fold the sides of each piece of dough into the top centre to round them; invert, then move them to a floured place on the work surface. Cover with a tea towel or oiled or sprayed clingfilm and let the pieces of dough rest for 5 minutes.

7. To form the *calzone* crusts, cut four 30cm squares from parchment paper. To form a crust, generously flour one of the squares of paper and place a piece of the dough on it. Flour the top of the dough and press it with the palms of your hands to flatten it, always trying to maintain an even round shape. Reach under the dough with both hands and gently pull from the centre outward to make it thinner, then pull from the edges outward from the top with a hand on either side of the dough and moving around the entire circumference. Check often during this whole process to be sure the dough isn't sticking and add more flour to the paper under the dough if necessary.

8. For advance preparation, pull the square of paper onto a large plate or pizza pan, generously flour the top, cover loosely with clingfilm, and refrigerate for up to 6 hours. Stack 4 crusts on the same pan and cover well with clingfilm.

Here are the ingredients for one *calzone*, which you can increase if you're making multiples. There is a base filling that's common to all, plus extras to add for each type. If you have room in the kitchen, you can let guests make their own.

1. Set a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 230°C/gas mark 8.
2. For the base filling, use a rubber spatula to stir the ingredients together. Stir in the garnish of your choice, or wait and sprinkle it on the base filling when assembling the *calzone* – the same goes for the mozzarella.
3. Remove a *calzone* crust from the refrigerator and make sure it isn't stuck to the paper. Mound the filling in a semicircle shape 2.5cm away from both the diameter and the edge of the crust. Brush a little water on the crust around the filling and fold the unfilled half of the dough over to meet it. Press the two edges together to seal.
4. Starting at one of the corners of the crust, pinch and pull the beginning of the folded edge out by about 5mm, then fold it back

onto the edge at a 45-degree angle, firmly pressing it into place. Repeat all around the folded edge of the crust.

5. Transfer the *calzone* to the pan and cut away any excess paper around it. If you're using a round pan and are baking another *calzone* on it, face the folded edge to the diameter of the pan. Use an X-Acto knife or the point of a pair of sharp scissors to cut 3 or 4 vents in the top of the crust, then brush with olive oil.

6. Bake until deep golden and firm, about 20 minutes. If you're baking more than one pan at a time, set racks in the lowest level and a couple of notches above, then switch racks about halfway through the baking.

7. Serve the *calzone* immediately and eat with a knife and fork.



Makes 1 *calzone*, 1 large or 2 smaller servings

#### BASE FILLING

225g whole milk ricotta, preferably freshly made  
 Freshly ground black pepper  
 1 tablespoon finely grated pecorino Romano  
 3–4 medium leaves fresh basil, rinsed, dried and stacked and cut into 5mm ribbons

#### GARNISHES

Any one of the following:

85g thinly sliced prosciutto, stacked and cut into 5mm ribbons

85–115g sweet or hot dried sausage or *soppressata*, peeled and cut into 5mm dice

85–115g cooked ham, stacked and cut into 5mm ribbons

170g sausage and pepper mixture on page 97

225g mushrooms, rinsed, sliced, and sautéed in 1 tablespoon olive oil with a little salt

225g grilled or roasted vegetables such as asparagus, courgettes, aubergines or onions, or a combination

55g sun-dried tomatoes, soaked in warm water for 1 hour, drained and seasoned with 1 tablespoon olive oil

115g fresh mozzarella, finely sliced or diced (may be used in combination with any of the above or on its own)

Note: If you want to mix fillings, reduce the amount of each proportionately to avoid overfilling

One *calzone* crust, page 174, chilled

Olive oil for brushing

One 30–36cm round pizza pan or swiss roll tin at least 28cm across the short side (if you are baking 2 at a time, one tin will do; if you are baking 3 or 4 at a time, you'll need two tins)

## vegetable & tuna pie from galicia in spain

Makes one 23 or 25cm empanada, 8 servings

### EMPANADA DOUGH

400g plain flour

1½ teaspoons sugar

1½ teaspoons fine sea salt

170g room-temperature tap water, about 24°C

7g sachet fine granulated active dried yeast or instant yeast

100g olive oil, plus more for brushing

1 medium egg

### FILLING

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 medium white onions, about 450g total, peeled, halved, and cut into 1cm dice

2 medium red peppers or pimientos, about 240–450g halved, stemmed and deseeded and cut into 1cm dice

60g green Spanish olives, pitted and coarsely chopped

2 x 140g tins tuna packed in olive oil, well drained and flaked

2 hard-boiled eggs, page 74, coarsely chopped

Freshly ground black pepper

Salt, if necessary

One 23cm square or 25cm round tart tin with removable base, ungreased

### QUICK CHANGES

Replace the tuna with 200g peeled and diced Spanish cooked chorizo, or thinly sliced and shredded jamon Iberico, Spanish ham similar to prosciutto.

Though we tend to think of an *empanada* as a kind of turnover, in Galicia, Spain, it's a kind of pie made with a yeast dough enriched with olive oil. Fillings may vary, but this one of onions, peppers, olives and tuna is a popular one. In Spain, this is usually made in a square or rectangular tin, but you can use a square or round tart tin. You'll have some scraps of dough left after lining the tin and covering the filling with the top crust – make some breadsticks and bake them on a maize meal-dusted tin on an upper rack while you're baking the *empanada*.

1. For the dough, mix the flour with the sugar and salt and set aside.

2. Whisk the water and yeast together in the bowl of an electric mixer, then whisk in the oil and egg. Use a large rubber spatula to stir in the flour mixture.

3. Attach the dough hook and beat on the lowest speed until fairly smooth, about 2 minutes. Remove the dough from the mixer and knead it for a minute.

4. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl and turn it so that the top is oiled. Cover with clingfilm and let the dough ferment until it doubles in bulk, 30–45 minutes.

5. For the filling, pour the oil into a wide sauté pan and add the onions and peppers. Place on a medium heat and wait until the vegetables start to sizzle. Toss, decrease the heat to medium-low, and cook, tossing occasionally, until soft, about 20 minutes. Off heat, stir in the olives, tuna and eggs. Taste and adjust the seasoning, if needed.

6. Scrape the filling to a thin layer on a large plate or a metal pan covered with clingfilm and chill while you roll the dough.

7. Set a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 220°C/gas mark 7.

8. Scrape the dough from the bowl to a floured surface and gently press to deflate. Divide the dough into two pieces, one of which is slightly larger than the other. Flour the surface, form the large piece of dough

into a rough disc without folding it over on itself, and roll it to a 30–33cm square (or disc if using a round pan). Fold the dough in half and transfer the dough to the tin, lining up the fold with the diameter of the tin. Unfold the dough into the tin and press it well against the bottom and sides of the tin, letting the excess dough extend over the edge of the tin.

9. Scrape the cooled filling into the lined tin and spread it evenly.

10. Roll the remaining piece of dough to a 28–30cm square or disc and centre it on the filling. Use your fingertips to press the two layers of dough together, then use scissors to cut away all but 5mm of the excess dough. Pull a piece of the overhanging dough upward and fit it into the space between the edges of the tin and the side of the crust all around to make a flat top on the *empanada*.

11. Cut 3 or 4 vent holes in the top crust then brush with olive oil.

12. Bake the *empanada* until it is deep golden and firm, 20–30 minutes. Remove to a rack and cool for 5 minutes before serving, or cool completely and serve at room temperature.

13. To unmould, stand the tart tin on a wide base, such as a large tin of tomatoes and let the side of the tin fall away. Slide the *empanada* to a round cutting board or serving plate to serve.



## POOLISH

7g sachet fine granulated active dried yeast or instant yeast

56g room-temperature tap water, about 24°C

56g whole milk, scalded and cooled

100g strong white bread flour

## DOUGH

2 medium eggs at room temperature

2 medium egg yolks at room temperature

1½ tablespoons sugar

All the poolish, above

265g strong white bread flour

1 ½ teaspoons fine sea salt

115g unsalted butter, softened

This is similar to the brioche dough in *BAKE!* but is both saltier and less sweet, making it perfect for filled breads like the recipes that follow in this chapter.

1. For the poolish, whisk the yeast into the water and wait a couple of minutes. Whisk in the milk, then use a rubber spatula to stir in the flour. Cover with clingfilm and let the sponge ferment until more than doubled, about 30 minutes.

2. Once the sponge has risen, use a rubber spatula to break up the eggs and yolks in the bowl of an electric mixer. Stir in the sugar. Scrape the risen poolish into the bowl and mix it into the eggs. Add the flour to the bowl and stir.

3. Place the bowl on the mixer fitted with the dough hook and mix on medium speed until the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl, 3–4 minutes. Let the dough rest for 10 minutes.

4. Sprinkle in the salt and beat the dough on medium speed for 1 minute. Add a third of the butter and beat until the butter is completely absorbed. Repeat with the remaining two-thirds of the butter. After all the butter has been incorporated, continue to mix until the dough is very smooth, elastic and shiny, 2–3 minutes longer.

5. Scrape the dough into a buttered bowl and turn it over so that the top is buttered. Cover with clingfilm and let rise until doubled in bulk, about 30 minutes.

6. To make forming the dough easier, deflate the dough and press it into a thick rectangle on a baking sheet covered with floured clingfilm. Cover with clingfilm and refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours.

## QUICK CHANGES

### BRIOCHE LOAF FOR SLICING OR SWEET BREAD PUDDINGS:

- Increase the sugar above to 3 tablespoons and decrease the salt to 1 teaspoon.
- At the end of step 5, scrape the dough to a lightly floured work surface. Flour your hands and gently round the dough without deflating it too much by pushing inward at the bottom with your flat upturned palms all around the piece of dough – you'll see the outside skin of the dough tighten and it will become more spherical.
- Stretch the rounded piece of dough into a rough rectangle and slide both hands under it, palms upward, and transfer to a buttered 23 x 12 x 7.5cm loaf tin. Cover the tin with a piece of buttered clingfilm and let the dough rise 4cm above the rim of the tin, about 30 minutes.
- About 20 minutes before the loaf is completely risen, set a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 190°C/gas mark 5.
- Bake the loaf until well risen and deep golden, with an internal temperature over 93°C. Unmould the loaf to a rack and cool on its side to prevent deflating.

My departed friend Anna Tasca Lanza, Marchesa di Mazzarino, learned to cook as an adult directly from Mario Lo Menzo, a monzu chef, tying into a tradition of elegant hybrid French/Italian cooking begun when French chefs first came to work in noble households in Sicily and Naples during the 19th century. This is a loose adaptation of Chef Mario's recipe, first prepared in honour of a visit by Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, to Regaleali.

1. Scrape the chilled dough from the bowl to a floured surface and gently press to deflate. Divide the dough into two pieces, one of which is slightly larger than the other. Flour the surface, form the large piece of dough into a rough disc without folding it over on itself, and roll it to a 36–38cm disc. Fold the dough in half and transfer the dough to the tin, lining up the fold with the diameter of the tin. Unfold the dough into the tin and press it well against the base and sides of the tin, letting the excess dough extend over the edge of the tin.

2. Scatter the filling ingredients onto the crust, ending with the peas.

3. Roll the remaining piece of dough to a 36cm disc and centre it on the filling. Use your fingertips to press the two layers of

dough together, then use scissors to cut away all but 5mm of the excess dough. Pull a piece of the overhanging dough upward and fit it into the space between the edges of the tin and the side of the crust all around to make a flat top.

4. Let proof for 20–30 minutes while you set a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 190°C/gas mark 5.

5. Right before placing in the oven, cut several vent holes in the top crust and brush with the egg wash.

6. Bake until the top crust is deep golden and baked through, about 30 minutes. Unmould and slide to a rack to cool. Transfer to a serving plate and serve slightly warm or at room temperature.

## sicilian filled brioche from regaleali

*Makes one 30cm filled bread, about 12 servings*

One batch Brioche Dough for Filled Breads, opposite, chilled in the covered mixer bowl for about 2 hours

450g mixed cheeses such as Gruyère, Gouda, Edam, and Fontina (use at least 2 types), cut into 1cm dice

225g best-quality cooked ham, cut into 1cm dice

280g frozen tiny peas, defrosted, brought to the boil in water to cover, cooked for 3 minutes, drained and cooled

Egg wash: 1 egg well whisked with a pinch of salt

One 25cm tart tin with removable base, ungreased



When Easter comes to southern Italy, it's time to use up all the dried sausages and other home-made cured meats before the weather starts to heat up. Due to that practice, and to the fact that milk and consequently cheeses are more plentiful in the Spring, Easter pastries like *pizza rustica* and other savoury pies are brimming over with both. *Casatiello* is a Neapolitan filled bread made by rolling salami, prosciutto and cheese into a yeast dough enriched with lard, shaping it into a ring, usually in a mould and decorating the top with eggs that cook through while the bread is baking. I've decided to make a totally non-traditional *casatiello* from brioche dough, and to incorporate the eggs, already cooked, right into the filling. A Neapolitan traditionalist might scoff at this version, but it's delicate, flavourful, and very much in keeping with the spirit of the original.

1. Invert the chilled brioche dough to a floured surface and flour the dough. Use the palms of your hands to press the dough to a rough rectangle. Roll the dough, moving it often and adding more flour under it to prevent sticking, until it is about 60 x 30cm.

2. Position the dough so that the 60cm side is parallel with the edge of the work surface; spray or brush it lightly with water.

3. One at a time, evenly scatter all the filling ingredients except the eggs on the dough, leaving a 2.5cm margin uncovered closest to the edge of the countertop.

4. Fold over about 4cm of the dough at the far end, then fold again, and roll the folded dough halfway towards you. Stop and add a line of the eggs on the still unrolled part of the dough closest to the rolled part, then continue rolling, ending with the seam side down.

5. Slide your hands, palms upward, in from each of the ends of the roll, and supporting the dough on your forearms, drop it into the prepared tin, seam side down.

6. Cover the tin with a tea towel or oiled or sprayed clingfilm and let the bread proof until it has increased 50% in bulk over its original size, about 45 minutes.

7. Meanwhile, set a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 190°C/gas mark 5.

8. Bake until well risen and deep golden and a thermometer inserted 5cm deep midway between the side of the tin and the central tube reads 93°C, about 60 minutes. Don't neglect to check the temperature – the outside might look done while there is still raw dough in the centre.

9. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then invert to a flat tin or cutting board and lift off the baking tin. Cover with a rack and invert again. Cool completely on the rack.

10. Cut the *casatiello* into 1cm slices and serve as a first course with other antipasti or as an hors d'oeuvre with drinks.

## neapolitan easter bread with salami, cheese & eggs

One batch Brioche Dough for Filled Breads, page 178, chilled for about 2 hours

115g sweet dried sausage or Italian salami, skinned if necessary and cut into 5mm dice

65g finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano

65g finely grated pecorino Romano

115g thinly sliced prosciutto, stacked and cut into 5mm dice

115g provolone, rind removed and cut into 5mm dice

5 hard-boiled eggs, page 74, sliced or coarsely chopped

One 3–4 litre ring mould or tube tin (don't use a Bundt tin), well buttered and sprayed with vegetable cooking spray

# smoked salmon & goat's cheese plait

*Makes one 38cm plait, 6–8 servings depending on the rest of the menu*

340g mild fresh goat's cheese, such as Montrachet, at room temperature  
115g cream cheese, at room temperature  
2 tablespoons small capers in brine, rinsed and finely chopped  
1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley  
2 tablespoons finely snipped fresh chives  
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest  
Freshly ground black pepper  
340g smoked salmon, sliced paper thin  
One batch Brioche Dough for Filled Breads, page 178, chilled for about 2 hours  
One baking sheet or swiss roll tin at least 30cm long

This is a transformation of a Danish pastry shape paired with a savoury filling, though like a sweet Danish, it would make a perfect brunch dish. It's impressive looking, easy to get ready in advance and adaptable to other fillings. The plaited top of the bread looks complicated, but it's really simple to do – you cut both sides of a rectangle of dough into thin strips and, after arranging the filling on the central and intact part of the dough, alternate folding the strips over the filling to give the bread an appealing woven top.

1. For the filling, use a rubber spatula to beat the cheeses together until smooth, then beat in the capers, parsley, chives and lemon zest. Grind some pepper over the filling, mix it in, and taste for seasoning; add more pepper if necessary. Separate the slices of smoked salmon and have them ready nearby.
2. Invert the chilled brioche dough to a floured surface and flour the dough. Use the palms of your hands to press the dough to a rough rectangle. Roll the dough, moving it often and adding more flour under it to prevent sticking, until it is about 30 x 38cm.
3. Slide the dough to a piece of parchment paper the same size as your baking tin, lining up the 30cm side of the dough with the shorter side of the paper. Turn the paper so that the 30cm side of the dough is facing you. Use a fingertip to mark the dough into 3 sections, each 4 x 15 inches. With a sharp pizza wheel, cut the two outer sections of dough into 1cm strips that are still attached to the centre section.
4. Spread half the cheese filling on the centre section of dough, then evenly arrange the salmon on it. Spread the remaining filling on the salmon (drop a dab of it here and there all over the salmon, then spread; easier than trying to spread a single blob of it the length of the plait).
5. Cut away the first and last two 1cm strips of dough on both sides of the filling. This will leave you with a 2.5cm flap of dough on

each end of the filling. Fold the flap to cover the end of the filling and close off the end of the plait. Then one strip at a time, and alternating one from each side, fold the strips over the filling starting at a slight angle to the centre rectangle and continuing the whole length of the plait. At the end, tuck the end of the last strip under.

6. Carefully slide the paper to your baking tin (if your tin has sides, slide the paper to a flexible cutting board or a piece of cardboard first, then slide it onto the tin). Cover with clingfilm and let the plait proof until it puffs slightly to about a 50% increase over its original bulk, about 30–45 minutes.

7. To prep in advance, cover and refrigerate, remembering that you'll need at least a couple of hours for the plait to come to room temperature and proof before baking.

8. About 30 minutes before the plait has finished proofing, set a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 190°C/gas mark 5.

9. Bake the plait until it is well risen and deep golden, 35–40 minutes.

10. Slide the plait to a rack to cool to room temperature before serving – both dough and filling taste much better after cooling than hot from the oven.

