

## Saltless Tuscan Bread

Legend has it that Tuscans started baking their bread without salt as a response to a prohibitively high tax on salt. Either that or they wanted a bland foil to their wonderfully flavorful vegetables, meats and cheeses.

There's really no secret to making this bread. You just, uh, leave out the salt. Traditionally it is made with a biga so I preserved that part of the process in coming up with this recipe. The secret part is how to eat the bread. Since the bread is rather bland by itself, you'll want to pair it with spicy or salty meats, cheeses or main dishes. Or make it into a bruschetta with some spicy tomatoes or garlic.

Start the bread 16 hours or so prior to eating. I'll typically start this bread in the evening and bake it late the next afternoon.

### Biga

Two Loaves	Ingredient	One Loaf
3 cups, 420 g	All-purpose flour, 32%	1 ½ cups, 210 g
½ tsp, 1.6 g	Yeast, 0.12%	¼ tsp, 0.8 g
1 ½ cups, 356 g	Water, room temperature, 27%	1 ½ cups, 178 g

In a large bowl, stir together the flour, yeast and water. Cover and allow to stand overnight at room temperature.

### Dough

Two Loaves	Ingredient	One Loaf
6 cups, 840 g	All-purpose flour, 63%	3 cups
½ cup, 71 g	Semolina flour or cornmeal, 5%	¼ cup
½ tsp, 1.6 g	Yeast, 0.12%	¼ tsp, 0.8 g
2 cups, 474 g	Water 36 %	1 cup, 237 g

The next morning, stir the dough water into the biga mixture, then stir in the yeast, semolina flour or cornmeal and all-purpose flour. Stir vigorously until smooth, then stir another 15-30 seconds. Cover and allow to rise at room temperature for 6-8 hours.

Divide the dough into two halves (if making two loaves), then shape into a batard or torpedo and place on a peel or baking sheet covered with parchment. Cover loosely with plastic wrap then allow to rise at room temperature for another 30-45 minutes while the oven warms up.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven, baking stone, and steam pan to 450 degrees. Uncover the loaves and score, then slide onto the baking stone. Turn the oven down to 400 degrees and pour a cup of water into the steam pan. Bake 45 minutes until the loaves are golden brown then remove to a wire rack to cool.