



GEORGIAN CHEESE BREAD

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 teaspoons (1/4-oz package) active dry yeast
- 7 tablespoons warm water (105-115°F)
- 1 2/3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, divided
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/4 lb Havarti cheese, coarsely grated
- 1/4 lb fresh mozzarella, coarsely grated (add 1/2 tsp salt)
- olive oil (for spraying or brushing)

Preparation

1. Sprinkle yeast over warm water and stir in a tablespoon flour. Let stand until creamy, about 5 minutes. (If yeast does not activate, start over with new yeast.)
2. Stir together salt and remaining flour in a large bowl, then stir in egg and yeast mixture to form dough.
3. Transfer dough onto a well-floured surface and turn to coat with flour, and then knead until smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. Form into a ball and dust with flour. Let the dough rest in a bowl, covered with plastic wrap, punching down with a wet fist every hour, at least 2 hours and up to 3.
4. Preheat oven to 500°F with rack in middle. Turn out dough onto floured pizza pan. Turn to coat. Flatten with your fingers into a 7-inch disk.
5. Toss together cheeses and compact them into a 3-inch ball with your hands. Place ball in middle of dough, then gather dough up around ball of cheese, squeezing excess dough into a topknot. Press down on topknot with a damp fist to press cheese out from center. Continue to flatten dough and distribute cheese evenly, pressing outward from center, until dough is an 11-inch disk.
6. Cut a 6-inch X through top of dough to expose cheese. Bake until pale golden, about 10 to 12 minutes. Brush/spray surface of dough with olive oil and bake until golden and cooked through, 3 to 5 minutes more. Serve cut into wedges.

Notes Dough can be made 1 day ahead and chilled in bowl (for a slow rise), covered with plastic wrap. Punch down and bring to room temperature before proceeding with recipe.

If you are using a perforated pizza pan, be sure to have a baking sheet on the rack underneath it when you bake the bread. There might be cheese dripping through the holes. On that note, the cheese might burn so be ready for a smoky oven (and kitchen, and house...).

The cheese bread reheats well in the microwave for 20 seconds.

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This recipe was adapted from recipe in the May 2008 issue of (the late) Gourmet magazine. It was featured on Gourmeted.com in May 16, 2008:

<http://gourmeted.com/2008/05/16/georgian-cheese-bread/>

Please email us at gourmeted@gmail.com if you have questions. Enjoy and happy eating!