

Schiacciata with cherries

By Michael Klausen, Brasserie Bread

When I travelled in Tuscany I came across a beautiful, rustic-looking bread called schiacciata con l'uva, an astonishingly sweet, juicy wine grape flat bread. At that time I didn't think too much about how and why, instead I just enjoyed the explosion of flavours from the sour grapes.

Schiacciata means "flattened down," and in Tuscany the term generally refers to flatbread. The dough is often made very wet and with lots of olive oil.

Now many years later I have put together an Australian summer version, made with cherries and schiacciata dough we developed years ago. Biting into the crunchy sweet and juicy schiacciata bursting with the flavour of cherries, caramel and savoury bread makes

your tastebuds jump. The bread is a sweet treat that combines the baker's artisanal skills with beautiful Australian cherries.

If you can get hold of fresh sour cherries, it is just perfect. It can, of course, be made with grapes or with olives, sea salt and rosemary instead of just cherries and sugar.

First you need to prepare the biga if you don't have one.

Ingredients (Makes 2kg dough or four schiacciata)

- 240g biga
- 940g unbleached organic flour
- 30g milk
- 30g good fine quality extra virgin Olive Oil
- 25g Murray River salt
- 715g cold water
- 20g yeast
- A little olive oil
- 1kg fresh cherries, organic if possible
- 8 tablespoons Demerara sugar (raw cane sugar)

Step 1

This takes place the day before. The biga is a 24 hour controlled fermented dough. Use any white dough that has been kept in the fridge. If you do not have any, make the recipe above without the biga, remembering you only need 240g.

Step 2

Scale all ingredients and get the biga active by taking it out of the fridge one hour before use.

Step 3

Mix the water, milk, yeast and oil together

in the mixing bowl, add the flour. Mix for 2.5 minutes at slow speed. Turn the speed up and mix for another six minutes.

Add the salt and chopped up biga.

Mix for another six minutes. The dough temperature should be around 25°C.

Hints

To mix this dough I have chosen to use an electric mixer, mainly because of the long mixing time and the very wet dough. Don't worry that the dough is very wet and sticky. It is not like normal dough. It will firm when the gluten becomes more active during the rest of the mixing.

Always chop up the biga before adding to the dough to help the mixing.

Step 4

Place the dough on a floured surface and bulk ferment for 15 minutes.

Step 5

Divide the dough into four pieces and pre shape into four rectangular pieces.

Step 6

Rest for 25 minutes to allow the gluten to relax and the dough to develop further.



Step 7

Shape the schiacciata by dipping your finger tips in olive oil and then pressing them into the dough. This should flatten the dough and make an oval shape.

Step 8

Now push the cherries into the dough and drizzle with the sugar.

Hint

Make sure the cherries are pitted. Do not do this until just before using them.

Step 9

Place the bread in the oven without steam. Bake for 20 minutes at 220°C.

Step 10

Take the bread out of the oven and cool on a bread rack. ■

Step 1



Step 3



Step 8

