

# Olive & Pesto Ciabatta

By Andrew Whitley  
(Makes three ciabattas)

Ingredients you will need:  
Gilchesters Organic Flour  
Black Pitted Olives  
Green Pesto  
Fresh Yeast

Long slow fermentation brings out the flavour of light flours and makes bread more digestible. Using a 'sponge' enables you to start with a small amount of yeast which grows overnight. Natural acids that build up in the sponge help make a stretchy, open-textured dough.

## The overnight sponge

<b>125g</b>	<b>Gilchesters Ciabatta flour</b>
<b>125g</b>	<b>water (at about 15°C)</b>
<b>5g</b>	<b>fresh yeast (2.5 g dried)</b>
<b>255g</b>	<b>total</b>

Dissolve the yeast in the water. Add the flour and mix to a soft sponge. Leave at room temperature to ferment for 16-24 hours.

## The dough

<b>250g</b>	<b>overnight sponge (see above)</b>
<b>250g</b>	<b>Gilchesters Ciabatta flour</b>
<b>10ml</b>	<b>extra virgin olive oil</b>
<b>5g</b>	<b>salt</b>
<b>150ml</b>	<b>warm water (approx)</b>
<b>150g</b>	<b>black pitted olives</b>
<b>50g</b>	<b>green pesto</b>
<b>865g</b>	<b>total dough weight</b>

Mix the overnight sponge, flour, oil, salt and water together. The dough should be very wet and sticky. Knead by hand or in a mixer until the gluten is well formed and you have achieved a springiness and natural elasticity in the dough. Do not add any flour, even though the dough seems impossibly soft. Now work in the olives and pesto, leaving the dough slightly streaky.

Put the dough on a dampened area of work bench and cover it with an upturned bowl.

Once you have seen that the dough has risen appreciably, remove the bowl. Dust the dough and the worktop next to it with flour. Using a plastic scraper or something similar, carefully cut the dough into three roughly equal pieces. As you cut, dust flour into the incision to prevent the surfaces rejoining.

Take each piece of dough and very gently – trying not to deflate the air bubbles that should have formed in the dough – place it on a baking tray, dusted with flour, stretch it longways, and form it into its characteristic 'slipper' shape. Give the finished pieces a final dusting of flour and then cover them for the final proof which should see their volume double.

This should take somewhere between one and two hours. Bake in a hot oven (220°C/440°F) for 12-15 minutes. Ciabatta should be only slightly brown because the floured surface prevents the crust from taking colour or going crusty.

Andrew Whitley's book *Bread Matters* contains many other recipes that work well with Gilchesters flour. For more information, go to [www.breadmatters.com](http://www.breadmatters.com)