

Alphabet Grissini

Season: All

Makes: 30 letters

Fresh from the garden: seasonal herbs (basil, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme)

These grissini letters are meant to be free-form and look a little rustic. Children might like to make them in the shape of the first letter of their name. Fresh herbs, seeds and spices can be added to the dough to enhance flavour and add interest.

NOTE: In this recipe, the dough is set aside to sit until it has doubled in size. This process, called 'proving', produces a light finish, and improves its texture.

EQUIPMENT

metric measuring scales, jugs, cups and spoons
2 large bowls
pastry brush
clean tea towel
2 large baking trays, at least
baking paper
plastic wrap
butter knives
wire rack
airtight container

INGREDIENTS

400 g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tbsp instant dry yeast
½ tsp salt, plus extra for sprinkling
1 cup lukewarm water
1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for greasing
½–1 tbsp fresh seasonal herbs, finely chopped
1 handful of sesame, poppy or fennel seeds, optional

WHAT TO DO

To make the dough:

- Place the flour, yeast and the salt into a large bowl.
- Create a well in the centre of the flour.
- Pour the water and oil gently into the well.
- Use your hands to incorporate the water and oil into the flour, until the dough clings together and feels springy.
- Turn the dough onto a clean, dry, floured workbench and knead for at least 8 minutes, until the dough looks smooth.
- Grease the inside of a large bowl with the extra olive oil, then put the dough into the oiled bowl.
- Cover the bowl with a clean, dry tea towel and leave in a warm, protected spot until the dough has doubled in size, at least 1 hour.



To make the grissini letters:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- Line the baking trays with baking paper.
- Tip the risen dough onto a clean, dry, floured workbench. Add the fresh herbs to the dough and knead briefly.
- Divide the dough in half and wrap one half in plastic wrap.
- Cut the other half into 15 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a rope about 30 cm long and 5 mm thick.
- Shape the dough ropes into the alphabet letters of choice. Using a butter knife, cut pieces of rope as needed to make the various parts of the letter. The alphabet letters can be constructed directly on the baking trays.
- Sprinkle the letters with salt and, if using, seeds or spices.
- Repeat the process with remaining dough.
- Bake for 10–15 minutes until the grissini is firm to the touch.
- Remove the baking trays from the oven and allow the grissini to cool a little on the trays before moving to a wire rack.
- Once completely cool, serve or store in an airtight container (for up to 2 or 3 days).

