



Pita Bread

Small round flat breads known as pita pockets are ubiquitous in Israel and served at almost every meal. Vendors at nearly every street corner sell what is probably the best-known Israeli fast food: a split pita bread stuffed with falafel balls, lettuce, hummus, and pickled vegetables.

But for a few days each year Israel's favorite bread disappears from many bread baskets, since Jewish religious law prohibits the consumption of leavened bread during the eight days of Passover. To spare the feelings of religious Israelis – and also to respect the right of secular customers to eat their beloved flat bread – some supermarkets offer the following compromise for the days of Passover: they continue to sell pitot, but they hide them behind layers of wrapping paper so that pious customers can't see it.

For 10 pita breads:

1 ounce (30 g) fresh yeast
4 cups (500 g) wheat flour
1½ cups (300 ml) lukewarm water
1 teaspoon salt
a little oil



Instructions:

Dissolve the yeast in ⅓ cup lukewarm water. Combine flour and salt in a large bowl and mix well. Pour in the yeast solution, then slowly add the remaining water stirring constantly.

Knead the dough until it is smooth and elastic. If necessary, add a little flour or oil. Cover the bowl with a dish towel. Let rise in a warm place for 1–2 hours, then knead for several more minutes and divide the dough into 10 balls.

Roll out each ball on a floured surface until you have a round disk about ½ inch thick. Cover the pita rounds with a cloth and let them rise for another 30–60 minutes.

Bake the pitot in an oven preheated to 430°F (225° Centigrade) for a few minutes until they turn light yellow. Serve with hummus, falafel, or salad!

Note: You may brush the pitot with egg yolk before baking. Then sprinkle them with sesame or poppy seeds or with coarse salt. Bake until golden brown.

