

Place the dough on a lightly floured work surface. Roll or pat the dough out into a round about ½ inch thick. With a 2-inch biscuit cutter or the rim of a glass, cut out as many rounds as possible. Gather up the scraps, work into a cohesive ball, reroll and cut out more rounds. Do not reroll the dough more than once or you will end up with tough biscuits.

Transfer the biscuits to the prepared baking sheet and bake until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Serve immediately with flavored butters or spreads. Makes about 9 biscuits.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Breakfast*, by Brigit L. Binns (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

Sage Bread Sticks

Thin, crunchy bread sticks are perfect to serve with appetizers; try wrapping them with thin slices of prosciutto and place them on an antipasto platter. Or serve them as part of the breadbasket for the holiday feast. When flavored with sage, they become a lovely accompaniment to turkey and dressing.

In a small bowl, sprinkle the yeast over the warm water and let stand until creamy, about 5 minutes. Stir until dissolved.

In a large bowl, using a wooden spoon, stir together 3½ cups of the flour, the salt and sage. Add the yeast mixture and the olive oil. Stir until a soft dough that holds its shape forms, about 2 minutes. Turn out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. If the dough feels sticky, knead in flour as needed.

Oil a large bowl, place the dough in it and turn it once to coat the top. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the dough rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

Preheat an oven to 400°F.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Punch down the dough, then cut into 4 equal quarters. Working with one quarter at a time, cut the dough into 18 pieces. Keep the remaining quarters covered with plastic wrap. Using your palms, and working with one piece at a time, roll out the dough to form a rope 10 inches long. Place the ropes 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake until the bread sticks are crisp and browned, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely. Repeat with the remaining dough quarters. Store the bread sticks in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Makes 6 dozen.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Savoring Series, *Savoring Italy*, by Michele Scicolone (Time-Life Books, 1999).

Ingredients for Flavored Butters
8 Tbs. (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature, for each flavored butter

For the pecan butter:

½ cup ground pecans

For the lime butter:

1½ Tbs. grated lime zest

1½ Tbs. fresh lime juice

For the chili butter:

2 Tbs. chili powder

2 tsp. cumin seeds

For the Italian herb butter:

3 tsp. minced fresh basil

2 tsp. minced fresh oregano

For the orange butter:

1 tsp. confectioners' sugar

2 Tbs. orange marmalade

Zest of 1 orange

For the strawberry butter:

1 tsp. confectioners' sugar

2 Tbs. strawberry jam

For the mixed berry butter:

1 tsp. confectioners' sugar

2 Tbs. mixed berry preserves

Ingredients for Flatbread (Focaccia)

1½ cups all-purpose flour

½ tsp. salt

2 tsp. baking powder

2½ Tbs. olive oil

1 egg yolk

¾ cup water

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Technique Class: Breads & Spreads for the Holiday Table

A warm slice of bread, fresh from the oven and spread with butter, is one of life's simple pleasures. The delicious taste and aroma of home-baked bread—be it a traditional dinner roll, a slice of warm corn bread or a crispy bread stick—appeal to all of our senses.

Flavored Butters

To prepare each type of flavored butter: In a bowl, using a handheld mixer, beat the butter on medium speed until soft and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and beat until combined, about 1 minute.

Transfer the flavored butter to a butter dish or small bowl and serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Make about ½ cup of each butter.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Flatbread (Focaccia)

A favorite in many parts of the world, flatbreads can be flavored with both savory or sweet additions, from a simple sprinkle of coarse salt to fresh herbs, spices, cinnamon sugar, cooked vegetables or fresh fruits. Most pizza dough recipes can be modified to become delicious flatbreads that will add flavor, color and shape to your holiday breadbasket.

Preheat an oven to 450°F.

In a bowl, sift together the flour, salt and baking powder. Make a well in the flour and add ½ Tbs. of the olive oil and the egg yolk. Gradually add the water, mixing the wet ingredients into the flour little by little with a wooden spoon. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until soft, smooth and elastic, about 1 minute. Form the dough into a ball and place in a lightly oiled large bowl. Cover with a kitchen towel and let stand in a warm place until the dough puffs slightly, about 30 minutes.

Lightly oil a 12-by-9-inch rimmed baking sheet. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough into a rectangle to fit the pan. Press into the prepared pan and trim away any excess dough. Drizzle the dough with the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil. Bake until the edges are beginning to brown, about 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly. Cut into squares and serve warm. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Foods of the World Series, *Barcelona*, by Paul Richardson (Oxmoor House, 2004).

