



## **Za'atar Babka Bread**

*A savory filled yeast leavened Babka bread that is fun to make*

### **Ingredients**

#### **Babka Dough:**

5-1/2 cup all-purpose flour (800g/28oz.)

3 (1/4 oz ea.) packages Platinum dry yeast

2 Tablespoons granulated sugar (25g/1oz.)

2 teaspoons salt

7 Tablespoons unsalted butter (100g/4oz.)

1-3/4 cups milk, warm (400ml)

2 eggs

4 Tablespoon Parmesan cheese (50g/2oz.)

**Za'atar Filling:**

5 ounces Za'atar seasoning (150g)

3/4 cup olive oil (150ml)

1-1/2 cups grated mozzarella or Monterey Jack cheese (150g/5oz)

1-1/4 cups dry Feta cheese (150g/5oz)

1 minced jalapeno pepper (optional)

1 egg, beaten with 1 Tbsp. water

**Directions**

**Before Baking Bread:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees F; spray inside of two 9x5 loaf pans with oil spray; line pans with parchment paper for easier removal; spray again with oil.

**Prepare Bread Dough:** Set 1 cup flour aside. Place remaining flour in mixing bowl with stand mixer fitted with a dough hook attachment, stir in dry yeast, sugar, and salt; mix to combine; set aside.

**Mixing Dough:** Place butter in medium saucepan over medium heat; cook to melt butter; add milk; cook until warm (about 120 degrees F). Pour into mixing bowl; mix to combine. Beat in eggs, forming soft dough. Mix in Parmesan cheese. Continue beating dough. Add reserved flour, one Tablespoon at a time until dough forms into a ball, leaving clean sides of the mixing bowl. The dough will be soft but not sticky. Don't add more flour than is needed.

**First Raising Dough:** Form dough into a ball; place in greased bowl; turn dough to coat both sides; cover bowl with a dish towel or plastic wrap; place in warm place for about 30 minutes or dough is puffy.

**Prepare Za'atar Filling:** In a bowl, stir za'atar seasoning with oil until slightly thickened paste-like mixture that is spreadable. Set aside.

**Shape the Dough:** Lightly sprinkle work surface and rolling pin with flour. Cut dough into two equal pieces. Roll one half of dough into a (12x16) inch rectangle. Carefully and slowly spread half of za'atar filling over dough, leaving about 1- inch edges without filling. Sprinkle grated mozzarella or Monterey jack cheese, then Feta cheese and minced jalapeno pepper over the top of the za'atar filling. Using floured hands, roll up the dough forming a 16-inch long log. Cut about 2-inches off each end and bake separately in greased small baking pan. Then, place the log on its seam inside the

shallow parchment lined pan. Repeat procedure with the remaining half of dough and filling. Place both logs in the refrigerator for 15 minutes to chill filling.

**Place in One Loaf Pan:** Place one log straight down on surface. With a sharp bread knife, carefully cut it lengthwise into two long separated pieces. The filling will be exposed. Place one log (filling side up) straight down on surface; place remaining dough (filling side up) crossed over the center in an X pattern. Starting at the center, twist one half of the log over and under the first log; then twist the remaining dough in the same way, forming a braid. Place braid into loaf pan. Scrunch end sides, making it fit into the pan. (Don't be afraid – it will work) In a small bowl, whisk egg with water. Lightly brush the top of bread with egg glaze. Repeat this procedure with the remaining log of dough to form the second loaf.

**Baking Bread:** Bake in preheated 375-degree F oven for 35 minutes or bread is golden brown. Using the parchment paper, remove the bread from the pans to a cooling rack. The fun part of this recipe is that each bread bakes up looking a little different. Yield: 2 bread loaves

**Recipe Inspired by:** Chef Shimi Aaron – Zoom Cooking Class

**About the Recipe:** A babka is a yeast leavened dough that is rolled out, spread with a filling, and then is rolled up and braided before baking. This originated in Poland, where it was baked in the Jewish communities. It is also popular in Israel. This recipe adds a savory twist to the usual sweet braided bread. It is filled with a za'atar feta filling. It is a fun recipe to make since it doesn't have to be perfect. I made three breads, and they all had their own personality. So delicious and perfect for snacking or sandwiches.

**Make Your Own Za'atar** (Triple the recipe to use for the Babka bread)

6 Tablespoons sesame seeds  
6 Tablespoons dried thyme leaves  
2 Tablespoon sumac powder  
1 teaspoon salt

In a small dry saucepan, toast sesame seeds over medium heat until golden. Stir frequently.

Combine cooled toasted sesame seeds, thyme, sumac powder, and salt.

Note: For a smaller quantity, divide the recipe in half.