

Za'atar Manaqish



Za'atar Manaqish

Manaqish or manakish are savory pastries popular in the Levant (Eastern Mediterranean) region. My mother in law, a master of the Levant kitchen, was the one who first introduced me to the making of za'atar manaqish. They are the perfect make-ahead snack, appetizer, or even brunch!

Ingredients

For Dough:

1 cup lukewarm water

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar

2 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons active dry yeast (one package active dry yeast)

3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, more for dusting

1 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For Za'atar Topping:

7 to 8 tbsp quality Za'atar spice

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra virgin olive oil

Serve with:

Fresh garden vegetables (tomato, cucumbers, radish)

Olives

Homemade labneh or feta cheese (omit if vegan)

Method

1. In a small bowl, combine water, sugar and yeast. Set aside for 10 minutes to foam.
2. Make the dough. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, salt, and olive oil. Work the mixture with your hands. Now, make a well in the middle and pour in the yeast and water mixture. Stir until soft dough forms.
3. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 10 minutes or until dough is elastic, smooth, and no longer sticky (as you knead, if dough is too sticky for you, you can sprinkle just a tiny bit of flour to help it).
4. Form dough into a ball and place in a lightly oiled mixing bowl. Cover with damp cloth and place in a warm spot (inside a warmed but turned-off oven is a good place). Leave to rise for 1 hour and 30 minutes.
5. Punch dough down. Knead briefly and form into 8 small balls. Arrange on lightly floured surface, cover again and leave to rise another 30 minutes.
6. Prepare the za'atar topping. While dough is rising, mix together the za'atar spice and olive oil in a bowl.
7. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Place a large baking sheet in oven while heating.
8. Form za'atar manaqish. Lightly oil the heated baking sheet and set near you. Flatten the dough into small discs about 5 inches in diameter. With your finger tips, make indentations in discs and add about 1 tbsp za'atar topping in the middle of each disc, leave a narrow boarder around. Arrange discs in prepared oiled baking sheet (use two sheets if needed, do not crowd the manaqish).
9. Bake in 400 degrees F heated-oven for 7 to 8 minutes or until the dough is slightly browned on bottom and edges (za'atar topping will remain liquidy at this point). Remove from heat and let sit for 5 minutes or so, the topping will

dry and settle into dough.

10. Serve za'atar manaqish warm or at room temperature with assorted vegetables, olives, feta cheese, or homemade labneh.

Notes

To serve as mezze simply portion the dough into smaller balls, form smaller discs about 3 inches in diameter instead. You should be able to make 12 or more manaqish. When you bake them, watch the oven closely as they will bake quicker.

Make-ahead instructions You can make these a week or two ahead and simply freeze them in freezer bags (I like to double the freezer bags to prevent freezer burns). Take as many of the manaqish as you need out to thaw at room temperature or in the fridge overnight. Warm in low-temperature oven. If you don't remember to take them out in advance, you can always simply heat in the oven from frozen.

10 WW Freestyle SmartPoints without additional toppings.

Source: The Mediterranean Dish (8 servings)