Garlic Rosemary Herb Focaccia

2 cups warm water

2 tsp sugar

2 tsp yeast, slightly less than one packet

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 Tbsp. salt

4 ½ to 5 cups flour

5 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

2 garlic cloves, minced

3-4 Tbsp. chopped fresh herbs (basil, thyme and rosemary) or 2 Tbsp. dried herbs

Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

Whisk half the water with sugar and yeast together in a bowl of your stand mixer fitted with a dough hook or paddle attachment. Cover and allow to rest for 5 minutes. Add the remaining water, olive oil, salt and 1 cup flour. Beat on low speed for 20 seconds then add 3 ½ cups more flour. Beat on low for 2 minutes. If the dough is still sticking to the sides of the bowl, add the last ½ cup flour. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface. With lightly floured hands, knead the dough for 4 minutes adding flour as necessary to keep dough soft and not sticky.

Lightly grease a large bowl with a teaspoon of oil. Place the dough in the bowl, coating all sides with oil. Cover with plastic wrap and let it rise for 2-3 hours or until double in size.

Generously grease a 12 x 17-inch baking pan with 2 Tbsp. olive oil. Punch down dough to release any air bubbles and place onto baking pan. Stretch and flatten the dough to fit the pan. Cover and let dough rest in the refrigerator at least an hour or up to 24 hours. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let it sit at room temperature as you preheat the over and prepare the toppings.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Whisk the 3 remaining tablespoons of olive oil with the minced garlic and herbs. Using your fingers, dimple the dough all over the surface. Drizzle on the olive oil topping and use your hands or a pasty brush to spread it all over the top. Add a little more olive oil if needed so the dough is completely covered. Sprinkle with a little coarse salt and pepper.

Bake for 20=25 minutes or until lightly browned on top. Cut and serve hot. Cover leftover focaccia tightly and store at room temperature for 2 days or in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.