Here at the store we make what we call, hedgehog breads. They are a delicious appetizer or light dinner option you could have with a salad. It is so simple and easy to customize anyone can do it with a little creativity and some time. Ingredients marked with a (\*) are available for purchase in our shop if you wish to make your own hedgehog, or you can buy one to take home with you and bake! So what you need is:

* Any large day old loaf of bread, unsliced\* (we use our sourdough and olive breads for this)
* Shredded cheese of your choice (swiss, cheddar, feta, pepper jack, mozzarella…)
* Olive oil\* (we use cold pressed olive oil from a farm in California)
* Seasoning (we use a blend but anything with salt, pepper, garlic, and other spices)
* Add ins (optional, but we use pepperoni in the pizza hedgehogs available at the shop)

First you want to slice your bread of choice. It is very important not to cut all the way to the bottom of the loaf. You want the bread to still be one whole loaf when you’re done. Do this in a cross hatch pattern with about 1-inch squares. Next, put your bread either on a sheet pan or bed of foil to catch any ‘debris’ when you’re stuffing. Then, drizzle the inside lightly with olive oil, bending back the bread gently to get oil in between the cuts- it doesn’t have to be covered at this point, just a little is fine. Now the fun part: stuffing. You can do any combination of cheeses and add-ins you like but simple is best. Our olive bread is great for doing a supreme type pizza, grilled cheese with cheddar and mozzarella is good in the sourdough, you could even do garlic cheese bread or even a holiday hedgehog by using whole cranberry sauce and brie or fontina. The possibilities are endless! Then just drizzle the top with some more olive oil and finally the seasoning and you’re done.

When you are done stuffing the hedgehog, bake it at 350 degrees for about 10-15 minutes. Allow to cool for a minute and then grab those little squares of bread and dig in! We also like to dip it in marinara sauce or a seasoned olive oil or even some olive tapenade for a Spanish or Mediterranean flare.

Tips:

1. Using day old bread will make this much easier! Trying to cut fresh baked bread into a cross hatch pattern is frustrating, trust us when we say 1 day old is better for this.
2. Bake for 15-20 minutes if you want the crust to be crunchier.
3. If you do accidentally cut down too far into the bread it’s ok- as long as it’s still attached by the crust you can just put some extra cheese there and it’ll glue back together in the oven.
4. Be careful with your add-ins so they aren’t too wet- you don’t want the inside of the hedgehog to get soggy.

Above all- remember to have fun and embrace your creative side!