

Please Your Palate Pizza

Makes four small (8 inch) pizzas

By Susie Iventosch

Crust

- 1 cup warm water
(about 100-115 degrees on a thermometer, or warm to the touch)
- 1 package active dry yeast (or 2 ¼ teaspoons)
- 2 to 3 cups all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sea salt or kosher salt

Combine water and yeast in large bowl. Gently whisk to blend in yeast. Add 1 cup flour, salt and olive oil and mix well. Add enough remaining flour to make soft dough. (You may need more or less flour, so add it gradually.) Turn dough out onto a floured board or cloth and knead until dough is smooth and elastic, about five minutes. Transfer dough to a clean, greased bowl and cover with a slightly damp kitchen towel. Let rise in warm place (not the oven) for about one hour or until doubled in size.

When dough has risen, divide into the number of pizzas you plan to make. If you want four pizzas, then make four small balls. For two larger pizzas, make two balls. If you prefer appetizer size pizzas, make eight balls. Cover dough with a towel and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes. Then dough will be ready to roll out and top.

Preheat pizza stone or heavy baking pan for 15 minutes in 450-degree oven.

Roll out dough and place on wooden or plastic cutting board, or pizza paddle. (Make sure there is a little extra flour under pizza rounds and sprinkle one tablespoon cornmeal underneath, as well. This will help to slide pizza onto baking surface.)

On top of the dough spread sauce, sprinkle grated mozzarella cheese and decorate pizza with your favorite toppings. Slide pizza with spatula onto pizza stone or baking sheet that has been greased with olive oil, or cooking spray and sprinkled with cornmeal. (We use an extra set of clean hands to help lift pizza onto baking surface.) Bake in preheated 450-degree oven 10 to 15 minutes, or until desired doneness.

Sauce

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Italian herbs (or whatever fresh herbs you like – fresh minced basil adds a nice touch.)
- 2 tablespoons red wine
- 1 12-ounce can tomato paste
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all of the above. Spread over pizza dough.



Homemade pizza

Photo Susie Iventosch

Topping Ideas

My family likes pizza with goat cheese, pine nuts, Greek olives, red bell pepper, roasted tomatoes, marinated artichoke hearts, and fresh mozzarella. It's fun to make for company, so that everyone can add their own toppings. For these events it is good to have the old standbys such as mushrooms, black olives, pepperoni, Canadian bacon, sausage and pineapples. Here are a few other topping ideas:

- Montrachet goat cheese (spread on dough before the pizza sauce)
- Pesto sauce (same as above)
- Fresh mozzarella cheese sliced
- Grated mozzarella
- Pine nuts
- Sautéed sliced or chopped red onions
- Roasted tomatoes (slice tomatoes, sprinkle with extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper and roast in 400 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes.)
- Kalamata Greek olives, sliced or chopped
- Ripe black olives, sliced or chopped
- Sundried tomatoes, julienned
- Julienned red bell pepper
- Marinated artichoke hearts, cut into quarters
- Sliced mushrooms
- Pepperoni
- Canadian bacon
- Pineapple chunks

These recipe is available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Pizza's Past



Katy Keough's topping for Pizza Margherita: red tomato, white mozzarella cheese and green basil.

Photo Doug Kohen

Although pizza has undergone a process of evolution over the centuries, it is most certainly the Mediterranean cultures that deserve credit for creating it. Historical records indicate that ancient Egyptians had a custom of celebrating the Pharaoh's birthday with flat bread seasoned with herbs, and Herodotus, a Greek historian described Babylonian recipes that are very similar to contemporary pizza crust.

Pizza took its current form in pre-Renaissance Naples. Poor peasants used their limited ingredients (wheat flour, olive oil, lard, cheese and herbs) to make seasoned flat bread garnished with cheese. In the 1800s an Italian baker, Raffaele Esposito, was believed to have created a dish for visiting royalty. To impress King Umberto and Queen Margherita, who were touring the

area, Signore Esposito chose to top the flat bread with food that would best represent the colors of Italy: red tomato, white mozzarella cheese and green basil.

Mozzarella cheese was one benefit of an invasion from Asian peoples, who brought the water buffalo to Italy. Still today, the best mozzarella is made from water buffalo milk.

Neapolitan pizza is widely regarded as the best in the world, probably due to the fresh ingredients available to pizzerias in Naples: herbs, garlic, and tomatoes grown in the rich volcanic ash of Mt. Vesuvius and fresh mozzarella from water buffalo milk.

Today pizza is about as American as baseball and apple pie, as witnessed by the 100 acres of pizza eaten each day in the U.S.

Other sources:

- <http://allthingspizzablog.blogspot.com/2007/10/all-things-pizza-pizza-fun-facts.html>
- <http://www.pizzandgarlicbread.com/pizza-fun-facts.aspx>
- http://www.inmamaskitchen.com/FOOD_IS_ART/pizzahistory.html