

Pizza Margherita

Cuisine

Italian

This is the famous Pizza Margherita, a true Italian classic. The story goes that it was made for Queen Margherita, and its toppings match the colours of the Italian flag: red tomatoes, white mozzarella, and green basil. It's loved for its simple, fresh taste and is a perfect example of delicious Italian food.

Time Required

- Preparation: 20 min (+ 1-2 hours for dough proofing)
- Cooking: 10-15 min

Ingredients

1. For the Dough:

- 1 ½ cups (355 ml) warm water
- 2 ¼ tsp active dry yeast
- 1 tsp sugar
- 4 cups (500g) regular all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil

2. For the Topping:

- 1 cup (240g) of tomato sauce (San Marzano tomato sauce)
- 8 (225g) fresh mozzarella cheese, cut into slices
- A handful of fresh basil leaves
- 2 tbsp extra olive oil
- A pinch of salt

Instructions

Prepare the Dough: In a small bowl, combine warm water, yeast, and sugar. Let it sit for 5-10 minutes until foamy. In a larger bowl, mix the flour and salt. Pour in the yeast mixture and olive oil. Mix until a dough forms, then massage on a floured surface for 10 minutes until smooth. Place in an oiled bowl, cover, and let it rise for 1-2 hours until doubled in size.

Preheat Oven: Preheat your oven to its highest temperature, typically 250-260°C (475-500°F). If you have a pizza stone, place it in the oven to heat up.

Shape the Pizza: Once the dough has risen, gently punch it down and cut it in half. Take one half and, on a floured surface, stretch it out into a circle about 10-12 inches wide. It's nice to leave the edges a little thicker for a chewy crust.

Add Toppings: Place the shaped dough onto a pizza peel or parchment paper. Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce over the surface, leaving a small border. Arrange the fresh mozzarella slices and a few basil leaves on top. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle with a pinch of salt.

Bake: Carefully transfer the pizza onto the hot pizza stone or a baking sheet. Bake for 10-15 minutes. You'll know it's ready when the crust is golden and the cheese is melted and bubbly.

Serve: Take the pizza out of the oven, throw on a few more fresh basil leaves for extra flavour, slice it up, and eat it while it's hot!