

Margherita Pizza



1-cup lukewarm water (about 100 degrees F)
¼ cup olive oil
1 ½ tsp sugar or honey
1 envelope rapid rise yeast
3 cups all purpose flour, plus extra as needed
1 ½ tsp kosher salt.

Preheat oven to 150 degrees or to the lowest setting. When oven reaches temperature, turn off the oven. Pour the water into the work bowl of a food processor or stand mixer (both should have dough attachment). Sprinkle the oil, sugar, and yeast over the water and pulse several times until mixed. Add the flour and salt and process until the mixture comes together. The dough should be soft and slightly sticky. If it is very sticky, add flour 1 tbsp at a time, and pulse briefly. If it is still too stiff, add 1 tbsp of water and pulse briefly. Process another 30 seconds.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured work surface; knead it by hand to form a smooth, round ball. Put the dough into a large, clean bowl that has been coated with olive oil and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Let it rise for 15 minutes in the oven before proceeding. Remove the dough from the oven, punch it down, and turn it out into a lightly floured work surface.

Divide the dough into four 4-inch balls and proceed with pizza-making instructions.

¼ cup cornmeal
One 4-inch ball prepared pizza dough, at room temperature
olive oil (about 3 tbsp)
1 cup tomato sauce or crushed canned tomatoes
1 pound fresh mozzarella sliced thin
Whole fresh basil leaves, cleaned and dried and chiffoned
Kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper

Place pizza stone in oven. Preheat oven to 450°F. Transfer dough to work surface. Roll, pat, and stretch dough to 8 – 10 inch round. Sprinkle pizza peel with cornmeal. Transfer dough round to prepared peel. Cover with plastic and let rest 10 minutes.

Using spoon spread ¼ cup of tomato sauce on pizza dough. Place ¼ pound of sliced mozzarella cheese on top of sauce.

Slide pizza from peel to pizza stone in oven. Bake until bottom of crust is golden brown and cheese is melted, 15 to 20 minutes. Using peel, transfer pizza to cutting board. Add chiffonades of basil, 1 tbsp olive oil, kosher salt and pepper. Cut into wedges and serve.

Each pizza serves 1 person as a main entrée or 4 people as an appetizer