

Pizza of the Imagination

Season: All

Makes: 2 × 26 cm pizzas

Equipment:

bowls – 1 small,
2 large
measuring scales,
cups and spoons
whisk
pastry brush
clean tea towel
chopping board
cook's knife
grater
rolling pin
28 cm pizza tray
wide egg lifter

Ingredients:

For the pizza dough:
1 cup lukewarm water
1 tbsp instant dry yeast
2 tsp sugar
1 tbsp extra virgin
olive oil, plus extra
for greasing
200 g plain
(all-purpose) flour,
plus extra for flouring
1 tsp salt
½ tsp semolina flour
(if using pizza stone)

For the pizza toppings:

- Select two or three ingredients such as:
 - ham, tomato & mozzarella
 - mushroom & ricotta
 - potato & rosemary
 - pumpkin & feta
 - red onion, black olive & rosemary
 - thin slices of ham & fresh pear
 - ... or fresh seasonal tastes of your own!

- Consider thin slices of fresh vegetables like potato, onions, pumpkin and zucchini.
- Try different kinds of cheese like parmesan, ricotta or feta.
- Preserves and pastes are great toppings, e.g. pesto, tapenade, olives or roasted peppers.
- Use fresh herbs like basil, oregano, parsley, rosemary leaves, sage, thyme ...

What to do:

To make the dough:

1. Place the water, yeast and sugar in a small bowl. Whisk and leave for 5–10 minutes until frothy.
2. Add the 2 teaspoons of oil to the yeast mixture and mix well.
3. Place the flour, salt and yeast mixture into a large bowl and mix together, then tip the dough out onto a floured bench and knead with your hands until it feels smooth and elastic.
4. Brush the inside of a large bowl with a little of the extra virgin olive oil. Put the pizza dough into the oiled bowl, cover with a clean, dry tea towel and put in a draught-free place until the dough has doubled in size. This process, called 'proving', will take at least 1 hour.
5. Tip the risen dough onto the workbench and knead briefly, then shape it into a round ball and return it to the bowl. Cover the bowl with the tea towel again, and leave for at least 20 minutes.
6. Preheat the oven to maximum.
7. Prepare your toppings while you wait for the oven to heat up – slice fresh vegetables thinly, grate or crumble cheese, remove olives from pips etc.

To assemble the pizza:

1. Scatter some flour on the workbench and roll the dough to form a thin disc about 26 cm in diameter.
2. Assemble the pizza directly onto the tray (again, flour the tray first).
3. Arrange your topping on top.
4. Drizzle the pizza with the last of the oil, then place the pizza in the oven.
5. Your pizza will need to bake for about 10–15 minutes, depending on your oven.
6. Transfer the cooked pizza to the board using the wide egg lifter.
7. Serve the pizza with fresh topping if you like, such as a handful of washed rocket leaves and parmesan.