

# Salt and Serenity

## Perfect Homemade Pizza Margherita

If you're planning to make your own dough, and I highly recommend it, the dough needs to be made the day before you plan to eat the pizza. It's not difficult. There is no kneading involved. Simply mix flour, water, yeast and salt in a large bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and leave on the counter for 18-24 hours. What happens will blow your mind! Time does all the work for you.

You will need a [pizza stone](#) for your oven or a [portable pizza oven for your BBQ](#). A wooden or [metal pizza peel](#) is also essential.

Makes four 12-inch pizzas.

Sauce recipe from Bon Appetit Magazine. Dough recipe from Jim Lahey.

### Dough:

1 recipe Jim Lahey's no knead pizza dough (recipe below)

OR 2 pounds store bought pizza dough

### Sauce:

2 cloves garlic, grated on microplane

1 28-ounce can crushed San Marzano plum tomatoes

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1½ teaspoons kosher salt

### Topping:

80 grams (about 1 cup loosely packed) shredded low moisture mozzarella

80 grams (about 1 cup loosely packed) shredded provolone cheese

112 grams fresh mozzarella or Buffalo mozzarella

55 grams freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about ½ cup loosely packed)

150 grams grape tomatoes (about 20 tomatoes), halved

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon kosher salt

16 fresh basil leaves

1. **Make sauce:** Whisk garlic, tomatoes, oil, and salt in a medium bowl. Don't be tempted to add more salt; the flavor will concentrate when sauce is baked with pizza. Cover and chill to let flavors come together before using.
2. Meanwhile, set a pizza stone on the bottom rack of the oven and preheat the oven to 500°, allowing at least 45 minutes for the stone to heat.
3. Flour your work surface and scrape the dough out of the bowl. Divide it into 4 equal parts and shape them. For each pizza, start with the right side of the dough and pull it toward the center; then do the same with the left, then the top, then the bottom. (The order doesn't actually matter; what you want is four

folds.) Shape each portion into a round and turn seam side down. Mold the dough into a neat circular mound. The mounds should not be sticky; if they are, dust with more flour.

4. Shape the pizzas, one at a time. On a lightly floured surface, pressing down with floured fingertips, shape the dough into a small, flat disk. Work from the center and push the dough outward, spreading your fingers as you make the disc larger. Keep the rim a bit thicker. Pick up the dough and move your hands along the edges, allowing gravity to pull the dough into a 12-inch circle. This method has been nicknamed, "Driving the Bus". Check out [this excellent video tutorial](#) for some visual cues.
5. Place dough on a round of parchment paper, slightly larger than the pizza. Top pizza with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of sauce and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of each of the cheeses. Scatter  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the halved tomatoes over the cheese. Sprinkle with  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt and drizzle with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons olive oil.
6. Transfer pizza, still on parchment paper, to a pizza peel. Slide onto the pizza stone and bake for 3 minutes. Using the pizza peel, slide pizza out and, carefully, using tongs, pull the parchment paper out and discard. The parchment paper is just used to make sliding the pizza into the oven easier. If you leave it in for too long, it will burn. Now that the bottom of the pizza is partially cooked, it will slide easily back onto the stone. Continue baking until cheese is melted with some browned spots and crust is golden brown and puffed, 11 to 13 minutes more if you are using your oven. If you have a BBQ pizza oven, it will cook quicker, maybe 5-6 minutes in total.
7. Remove from oven and scatter 4 torn basil leaves over pizza. Repeat with remaining 3 pizzas. It is best to shape and top them just before baking.

## Jim Lahey's No Knead Pizza Dough

Recipe from Jim Lahey's stellar book *"My Pizza: The Easy No-Knead Way to Make Spectacular Pizza at Home."*

Makes enough dough for four 12-inch round pizzas.

500 grams (17  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounces or about 3  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups) all-purpose flour, plus more for shaping the dough

1 gram (1/4 teaspoon) active dry yeast

16 grams (2 teaspoons) fine sea salt

350 grams (1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups) room temperature water

1. In a medium bowl, thoroughly blend the flour, yeast, and salt. Add the water and, with a wooden spoon or your hands, mix thoroughly.
2. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a kitchen towel and allow it to rise at room temperature (about 72°F) for 18 hours or until it has more than doubled. It will take longer in a chilly room and less time in a very warm one.

\*Notes: If you don't intend to use the dough right away, wrap the balls individually in plastic and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Return to room temperature by leaving them out on the counter, covered in a damp cloth, for 2 to 3 hours before needed

Do Ahead: Sauce can be made 1 week ahead. Keep chilled. Any extra sauce can be frozen.