

# Margherita Pizza

## Margherita Pizza

The typical American pizza with artificial and ultra-processed ingredients is a major source of unwanted sugars, fats, sodium, and additives in the Standard American Diet (or as it is appropriately known, the SAD). It is about as far removed from a real Italian Margherita pizza as the annoying stick family bumper sticker is from the Mona Lisa. A simple Margherita pizza is just 4 basic components; dough, sauce, mozzarella cheese, and basil. When real ingredients are used it doesn't get much better or healthful. I prefer to place the basil on the pizza after it comes out of the oven and allow the residual heat warm it. Cooking the herbs (especially in conventional ovens which do not reach the high temperatures of traditional pizza ovens) over several minutes rids them of volatile oils. Those oils supply that unique smell when you pick and cut or crush a basil leaf. Basil is one of the oldest herbs known to the humankind. It has been treasured for centuries, both for its culinary as well as its healing and healthful properties. Cinnamate, citronellol, geraniol, linalool, pinene and terpineol are some of the essential oils that are present in basil. These essential, but volatile, oils are one reason why basil has been used for centuries to alleviate stomach ailments; including indigestion, bloating, and acid reflux.

### ***Ingredients:***

- [Basic Pizza Dough Recipe](#) (makes enough for 4 personal, ~10 inch pizzas)
- Red sauce (or just fresh, pureed or San Marzano tomatoes)
- 1 tbsp good quality olive oil
- 4 ounces fresh mozzarella

- Small handful of basil leaves (or as much or little as you like)
- Any other toppings you like

### ***Directions:***

Preheat your oven to highest setting (for most US ovens this is 500 degrees F). Follow the directions for the pizza dough. When ready, stretch it out on a lightly floured surface to desired shape and thickness. Depending on how crispy you like the crust, you may wish to pre-bake the crust; this step is optional. If you do, I recommend you cover the crust with and additional pizza pan, aluminum foil. This will prevent the exposed crust from burning whilst the cheese melts. If you pre-bake, cook it for about 6 minutes. At this juncture, lightly coat the dough with red sauce. For pizzas, since the sauce will cook in the oven, I prefer simply fresh pureed tomatoes (REAL tomatoes though, not the every under-ripe baseballs from the mega marts). If you can't access real, fresh tomatoes, a great alternative are San Marzano tomatoes. These Italian beauties are grown around Naples where the volcanic soil courtesy of Mt. Vesuvius gives them an unique, ole-world flavor. Drizzle with good quality olive oil. Top with cheese. If you buy store bought fresh mozzarella, the kind that comes packed in water, you will need to remove the excess water first otherwise the entire pizza will be a soggy mess. To do this, which can be done ahead of time and stored in the refrigerator, set you oven on its lowest setting. Slice the mozzarella onto a foil coated sheet tray lightly oiled. After about 5-8 minutes the will be a puddle of water around the cheese. Pout of the water and place the hot cheese in a small container. Place slices of the cheese on the pizza. Lightly season with salt. Add another desired toppings. Cook the topped crust for another 6 minutes or until desired doneness achieved. Remove from the oven, place the basil leaves on and allow to cool for a few minutes. Slice, serve, enjoy!



Margherita Pizza with anchovies