

GOURMET
PIZZA



SECRETS
&
RECIPES

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PREFACE

First Edition - November 1986

This booklet has been prepared to share the joy of gourmet pizza. Secret and recipe credits go to me, my teacher Carmen Jones (in relation), and various cookbooks.

Second Edition - February 1988

The quest for the perfect pizza is endless, but I'll endure. For eating pizza out in Houston, try Pizzeria Uno at 7431 Westheimer (Westheimer at Hillcroft), Birroporetti's in the same block as the Alley Theater (+5 other locations), Star Pizza at 2111 Noctnik (Greenbriar, north of SW Freeway), and Nino's at 2817 W. Dallas. I've had the pizza at the first three and the other comes highly recommended. For good pizza in the NASA-Bay area, I go to Mario's in Webster.

Third Edition - May 1990

The Houston Post top-rated pizzeria, Fuzzy's Pizza, at 823 Antoine (one block south of I-10) has excellent vegetarian pizza with whole-wheat crust. California-style pizza has made it to Houston at Carrabba's at 3115 Kirby. And I'm still trying to decide how to reconfigure our kitchen with a wood-burning brick oven so I can make some really authentic pizza.

Coye Mac Jones, Pizza Lover

THE HISTORY OF PIZZA*

Considered a peasant's meal in Italy for centuries, modern pizza is attributed to baker Raphael Esposito of Naples, who in 1889 created a pizza especially for the visit of Italian King Umberto and Queen Margharita. The pizza, named Pizza Margharita, was very patriotic and resembled the Italian flag with its colors of red (tomatoes), white (mozzarella cheese), and green (basil). Pizza Margharita got rave reviews and set the standard by which our modern pizza evolved. Actually, the idea of using bread as a plate came from the Greeks, who ate flat round bread (plakuntos) baked with an assortment of toppings. The tomato came to Italy from Mexico and Peru through Spain in the 16th century as an ornamental plant first thought to be poisonous. True mozzarella cheese is made from the milk of the water buffalo imported from India to the Italian region of Campagna (Naples) in the 7th century. So the Neopolitan baker, as the saying goes, put it all together.

Pizza migrated to America with the Italians. The first U.S. pizzeria opened in 1905 in NYC, but it wasn't until after WWII when returning GI's created a nationwide demand for the pizza they had eaten and loved in Italy that pizza went public. My first recollection of pizza is homemade "box" pizza (Chef Boyardee) with canned pizza sauce, hamburger meat, and parmesan cheese, and I loved it. In the late 1950's, Shakey's and various other mass production pizza parlors appeared.

Pizza in this day and age is not limited to the flat round type, it's also stuffed pizza, deep-dish pizza, pizza pockets, pizza turnovers, rolled pizza, pizza-on-a-stick, etc., all with combinations of sauce and toppings limited only by one's inventiveness. However, the best pizza still comes from the individual pizzaiolo, a pizza baker, who prepares his yeast dough and ingredients fresh daily and heats his brick oven for hours before baking the first pizza.

* piz' za, n. (It.), A large open pie made typically of thinly rolled bread dough spread with a spiced mixture (as of tomatoes, cheese, ground meat, garlic, oil) and baked.

PIZZA SECRETS

Pizza is not difficult to make. It can be as simple or as complex as you want to make it. Both approaches can produce success. The simpler approach would be to work with prepackaged ingredients versus the more time-consuming approach of starting with fresh and scratch ingredients. Either way, three basic factors apply for good pizza:

- I. Construct correctly - crust, sauce, cheese, and toppings
- II. High temperature - bake at 500°+ F
- III. Pre-bake crust 5 minutes

Crust Secrets:

- a. Use high-gluten flour (Pillsbury Bread Flour or Gold Medal Better For Bread)
- b. Pre-bake crust for 5 minutes to prevent sogginess from ingredients
- c. Bake on pizza stone or baking tiles for crisper crust
- d. Seal pre-baked crust with Crisco after cooling and then add sauce/toppings if preparing ahead or freezing

Sauce Secrets:

- a. Intensity of sauce can be adjusted by the amount of garlic and peppercorn used
- b. "Bite" of sauce can be controlled by adding Italian vinegar (7% acid) or Balsamic vinegar
- c. Crush/crack whole peppercorn - do not grind

Cheese Secrets:

- a. Use whole milk cheeses - smoother melting and richer tasting
- b. Try different cheeses - monterey jack, provolone, chevre, fontina, etc.
- c. Use cheese mixtures - for example, 2 parts mozzarella, 2 parts monterey jack, and 1 part provolone

Toppings Secrets:

- a. Buy fresh and prepare yourself - use fresh vegetables and herbs, if available
- b. Rub dried herbs between your hands to release flavor oils
- c. Thoroughly drain any topping that would add moisture to prevent sogginess
- d. Use extra virgin olive oil (expensive, but there is a difference)

PIZZA DOUGH

2 tablespoons salt
1 1/3 quarts warm water
.2 oz. wet yeast (1/3 of .6 oz package)
5 lbs. high gluten bread flour
1/2 cup olive oil

To prepare: Dissolve salt in warm water and melt yeast in same. Add olive oil, then flour to water until medium stiff dough is formed. Turn out and knead until smooth (by hand 20 to 25 minutes, by machine 15 minutes). Place in large, lightly greased bowl, cover with cloth, and let rise 45 minutes. Punch down and separate into portions for individual crusts (7 oz. for 8" crust, 15 oz. for 13" crust, 20 oz. for 20" crust). As each portion is prepared, wrap immediately in plastic wrap and refrigerate, while keeping bulk dough covered with cloth. Refrigerate dough portions for at least 3 hours before baking. This recipe makes 7 to 8 13" crusts.

To bake: Take an individual dough portion and spread by hand (or by throwing) on greased pizza pan. Prebake crust in hot 500° F oven for 5 minutes before adding sauce and toppings.

Whole Wheat Crust: Replace 4 cups high gluten flour with 3 1/2 cups whole wheat flour and 1/2 cup wheat germ.

PIZZA SAUCE I
(COOKED)

4 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
6 large cloves garlic, minced
2 lbs. veal soup bone
2 28 oz. cans peeled tomatoes (Progresso)
1 12 oz. can tomato paste (Contadina)
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon basil
2 teaspoons oregano
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
2 teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon whole peppercorn, cracked
1 tablespoon Italian or Balsamic vinegar (optional)

Heat olive oil in large pan. Add onion and garlic and saute until transparent. Add soup bone (trim excess fat) and brown (careful not to burn garlic). Add tomatoes (puree in blender first), tomato paste, and rest of seasonings. Cover and let simmer for 1 1/2 hours. Uncover and cook for another 1 1/2 hours while stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaves and soup bone and flake meat from bone and chop and return meat to sauce. Add vinegar to add "bite" to sauce. This is enough sauce for 7 to 8 13" pizzas.

PIZZA SAUCE II
(UNCOOKED)

1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons oregano
3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
3/4 teaspoon black peppercorn, crushed
2 teaspoons grated parmesan cheese
1 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes (Progresso)
3 oz. tomato paste (1/2 of 6 oz. can Contadina)

Mix ingredients and refrigerate overnight before using. This is enough sauce for 6 to 7 13" pizzas.

PIZZA MARGHARITA

1 28 oz. can peeled tomatoes (Progresso), drained and seeded
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 13" prebaked pizza crust
3/4 lb. shredded mozzarella cheese
1 teaspoon basil
1/4 cup shredded parmesan cheese
olive oil

Cut tomatoes into chunks and cook in covered sauce pan with olive oil and salt for 2 minutes, then uncovered for 5 minutes. Drain and cool. Brush hot prebaked pizza crust with olive oil. Top crust with mozzarella cheese, tomatoes, parmesan cheese, and basil. Drizzle with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

RING PIZZA

1 13" unbaked pizza dough round
1 red, yellow, and green bell peppers
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 lb. fontina cheese, shredded
olive oil

Put fist into center of unbaked pizza round to create a "donut" or ring. Prebake ring in hot 500° for 5 minutes. Cut seeded bell peppers into strips and saute in olive oil. Brush hot prebaked pizza crust with olive oil. Top crust with fontina cheese and bell peppers and drizzle with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

PEPPERONI PIZZA

1 13" prebaked pizza crust
3/4 cup pizza sauce
3/4 lb. shredded mozzarella cheese
olive oil
pepperoni slices

Using hot prebaked pizza crust, brush crust rim with olive oil and lightly sauce. Top crust with mozzarella cheese and drizzle with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven, add pepperoni slices, and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

PIZZA FALERMO

1 13" prebaked pizza crust
3/4 lb. shredded mozzarella cheese
1 tablespoon herbs (basil, parsley, marjoram mixture)
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 2 oz. can anchovy flat filets, drained
10 to 15 whole pitted black olives, halved
ground peppercorn
olive oil

Marinate cheese with oil and herbs at room temperature for 1 hour. Brush hot prebaked pizza crust rim with olive oil. Top crust with mozzarella cheese, anchovies, and black olives. Pepper to taste and drizzle with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

ITALIAN SAUSAGE AND ONION PIZZA

1 13" prebaked pizza crust
3/4 lb. Italian sweet sausage links
1 large onion, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 oz. fresh mushrooms, quartered
1/2 cup pizza sauce
1/4 cup parmesan cheese
olive oil

Cook sausage links in skillet until no longer pink in center. In saucepan, cook onions in oil until soft. Add mushrooms and cook 5 minutes. Drain sausage and slice diagonally. Brush hot prebaked pizza crust rim with olive oil and lightly sauce. Top crust with onion mixture, sausage, and parmesan cheese. Drizzle with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

DEEP-DISH STUFFED PIZZA

1 14" prebaked deep-dish pizza crust
1 14" unbaked pizza dough round
1 1/2 cups pizza sauce
1 1/2 lbs. shredded mozzarella cheese
1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
1/2 lb. sweet Italian sausage, browned/crumbled and drained
1/2 cup small pepperoni pieces
1/3 cup sliced black olives
1/3 cup sliced green olives
1/2 package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 teaspoon oregano
1 large tomato, peeled and sliced thin
olive oil

In large bowl mix together half of mozzarella cheese and all of the parmesan cheese, sausage, pepperoni, spinach, olives, and seasonings. Using the hot prebaked pizza crust in a deep-dish pan, lightly sauce and add mixture of toppings. Place dough round on top and seal edge with water. Brush top unbaked crust rim with olive oil and lightly sauce. Bake in hot 375° F oven for 30 minutes. Remove from oven, pat other half of mozzarella cheese on top and arrange tomato slices on top of cheese. Return to oven and bake for an additional 10 to 15 minutes until top cheese is melted and starts to brown. Remove from oven and cool 5 to 7 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

VEGETARIAN PIZZA

1 13" prebaked whole wheat pizza crust
3/4 cup pizza sauce
1 large tomato, peeled and sliced
1 green bell pepper, seeded and sliced in rings
1/4 cup sliced black olives
1 jar (6 oz.) marinated artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
1 cup broccoli flowerets
1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
1/2 lb. shredded monterey jack cheese
1 cup alfalfa sprouts

Using hot prebaked whole wheat pizza crust, lightly sauce. Add green pepper, olives, artichoke, and broccoli. Arrange sliced tomato halves around perimeter. Top crust with parmesan cheese then monterey jack cheese. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and begins to bubble. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes. Garnish with alfalfa sprouts around perimeter before cutting into wedges and serving.

CALZONE

2 10" unbaked pizza dough rounds
olive oil
1/2 cup pizza sauce
1/2 lb. shredded mozzarella cheese
1/4 lb. ricotta cheese
1/3 lb. sweet Italian sausage, browned/crumbled and drained
1 tablespoon chives
1 tablespoon basil

In a bowl mix together mozzarella cheese, ricotta cheese, sausage, chives, and basil. Place one pizza round on a pizza peel sprinkled with cornmeal. Quickly do the following to prevent the dough from sticking to the peel. Lightly sauce 1/2 circle and within 1" of edge of pizza round. Add 1/2 of mixture and fold over and seal edge with cold water to form a stuffed half circle. Double seal by folding bottom crust over top edge and then pressing edge with fork tynes. Make three slits in top crust with knife and brush with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 15 minutes until crust is golden brown. Remove from oven, cool 5 to 7 minutes and serve.

FOUR CHEESE PIZZA

1 13" prebaked pizza crust
olive oil
1/4 lb. shredded mozzarella cheese
1/4 lb. shredded monterey jack cheese
1/4 cup shredded parmesan cheese
1/4 lb. chevre cheese, crumbled
1/4 minced scallions
1 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon basil

Brush hot prebaked pizza crust with olive oil. Mix mozzarella and monterey jack cheeses and top crust. Also top crust with scallions, parmesan cheese, then chevre cheese. Sprinkle with oregano and basil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven, cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

NOUVELLE PIZZA

1 red bell pepper, seeded and sliced in rings
1/2 cup Italian dressing
1/4 cup olive oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled
1/4 teaspoon oregano
1/4 teaspoon basil
1/2 teaspoon chopped parsley
1/4 teaspoon marjoram
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/4 teaspoon ground peppercorn
pinch of salt
1 13" prebaked pizza crust
1/2 lb. shredded fontina cheese
1/3 lb. chevre cheese, crumbled
olive oil

Steam bell pepper rings for 5 minutes, then marinate in Italian dressing while doing the following preparation. Combine oil, garlic, and seasonings in blender and puree for "white" sauce. Sauce hot prebaked pizza crust. Top crust with fontina cheese, then chevre cheese. Drain bell pepper rings and arrange on top. Brush crust rim with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

MONTEREY PIZZA

1/4 cup salad oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled
1/4 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin seed
1/4 teaspoon ground peppercorn
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 13" prebaked pizza crust
3/4 lb. shredded monterey jack cheese
1/4 cup sour cream
1/4 cup sliced jalapeno pepper
1/4 cup diced tomato
1/4 teaspoon whole peppercorn, cracked
olive oil

Combine salad oil, garlic, and seasonings in blender and puree for "white" sauce. Sauce hot prebaked pizza crust. Add monterey jack cheese and dollop with sour cream. Top with jalapeno pepper slices and tomato and sprinkle with cracked peppercorn. Brush crust rim with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

CALIFORNIA PIZZA

1 13" prebaked pizza crust
1/2 lb. shredded mozzarella cheese
1 jar (6 oz.) marinated artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
1/3 lb. chevre cheese, crumbled
2 garlic heads, roasted (1 hour at 425° in heavy oil)
olive oil

Brush hot prebaked pizza crust with olive oil. Top crust with mozzarella cheese, artichoke hearts, chevre cheese, and peeled roasted garlic cloves. Drizzle with olive oil. Bake in hot 500° F oven on pizza stone for 10 to 15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool 2 to 3 minutes before cutting into wedges and serving.

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