

## *Best Homemade Margherita Pizza*



### **Ingredients:**

- 1 ball of Tony Gemignani's Master Dough with Starter

### **Ingredients for the Sauce:**

- 14 ounces (1 can) pureed peeled whole San Marzano tomatoes, drained
- 2-3 fresh garlic cloves, minced with a garlic press
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2-3 large pinches of kosher salt

### **Toppings:**

- 2 – 3 tablespoons finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, plus more for serving
- 7 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, either sliced or cut into ½-inch cubes
- 5 – 6 large fresh basil leaves, plus more for garnishing
- Sliced Roma tomatoes
- Crushed dried red pepper flakes (optional)

### **Method:**

1. Prepare and refrigerate the dough for 24-48 hours in advance. Remove the dough from refrigerator and left warm to room temperature 3 hours prior to assembly.
2. Preheat Oven and Pizza Stone: Place the pizza stone on the center or top third of your oven, and preheat the oven and pizza stone to 550F for at least 30-45 minutes. If your oven does not go up to 550 degrees, heat it to the absolute maximum temperature that it can go. If it can heat to higher than 550F, even better!
3. As the oven is preheating, assemble the ingredients. In a small bowl, stir together the pureed tomatoes, minced garlic, extra virgin olive oil, pepper, and salt. Set aside another small bowl with the cubed mozzarella cheese (pat the cheese with a paper towel to remove

any excess moisture). Set aside the basil leaves and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese for easy grabbing.

4. Assemble the Pizza by sprinkling the pizza peel with a tablespoon of semolina or corn meal. Form and or toss the ball of pizza dough into roughly a 13-inch circle. If the dough springs back or is too elastic, allow it to rest for an additional five minutes. The edges of the dough can be slightly thicker, but make sure the center of the dough is thin (you should be able to see some light through it if you held it up). Gently transfer the dough onto the dusted pizza.
5. Drizzle or brush the dough lightly with olive oil (teaspoon or so). Using a large spoon, add roughly  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the tomato sauce onto the pizza dough, leaving a  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch border on all sides. Use the back of the spoon to spread it evenly and thinly. Sprinkle a tablespoon of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese onto the pizza sauce. Add half of the mozzarella, distributing it evenly over the entire pizza. Using your hands, tear a few large basil leaves, and sprinkle the basil over the pizza.
6. At this point, I will occasionally stretch the sides of the dough out a bit to make it even thinner. Gently slide the pizza from the peel onto the heated baking stone. Bake for 7 to 8 minutes or until the crust is golden, the cheese is bubbling and caramelized, and the edges of the pizza are golden brown. Remove the pizza carefully from the oven with the pizza peel, transfer to a wooden cutting board or foil, drizzle the top with olive oil, some grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, and chiffonade of fresh basil. Slice and serve immediately and/or prepare the second pizza.