

Pizza Napoletana Margherita

A nice compromise between uber-authentic, and actually being able to find ingredients in your home town. Other than the dough, this is about as authentic as you'll find anywhere on this side of the pond.

Ingredients:

For the Dough:

- 4 cups sifted flour
- 1 package dry quick-rise yeast
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon soft shortening
- 1 1/2 cups + 1/4 cup of warm water

For the Pie:

- 1 can San Marzano tomatoes
- 8-15 oz fresh buffalo mozzarella
- Extra virgin olive oil (high quality)
- Sea salt

Mix the yeast with 1/4 cup of water and set aside. Mix the dry ingredients together, then add shortening, water and yeast mixture. Mix, then knead for a minute or two. Set it in a bowl, and set that bowl in the sink with some warm water. Cover with a towel, and let it rise for 30 minutes. This should make 3-4 pies, depending on how thick you like them.

While the dough is rising, place a pizza stone in the oven, and preheat 500. When the dough is done rising, break off a chunk about the size of two handfuls, and put it on a piece of wax paper that is covered with a little bit of flour and cornmeal. Spread it out to make a shape that somewhat resembles a circle. Transfer that dough to the crust, and mbake the crust for 6 minutes.

Pull it out, and start topping! Using your hands, crush 3-4 tomatoes onto the dough. Season with sea salt. Top lightly with mozzarella, then drizzle with olive oil. Bake until the cheese is melted (another 3-4 minutes). Serve.

Variation: Try it with lightly smoked provolone cheese instead of mozzarella (as pictured above).

