

NEAPOLITAN PIZZA WITH BUFFALO MOZZARELLA, TOMATOES & BASIL

PIZZA MARGHERITA

Pizza originated in Naples and it's where the best, most authentic pizza can still be found today – and I'm not just saying that because I'm a Neapolitan! Apparently this topping was created in the 19th century to honour the visit of Queen Margherita to Naples, as it represented the colours of the Italian flag – red, white and green. Try to use buffalo (rather than cow's milk) mozzarella if you can.

Makes 2

200g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting	For the topping
1 x 7g sachet of fast-action (easy-blend) dried yeast	1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
½ teaspoon salt	2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing and brushing	2 x 125g balls of buffalo mozzarella cheese, drained and cut into small cubes
	10 fresh basil leaves
	Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1] Put the flour in a large bowl. Add the yeast to one side of the bowl and the salt to the other. Make a well in the centre and add the oil then gradually pour in 140ml warm water. Using the handle of a wooden spoon, mix together thoroughly to create a wet dough. Turn out the dough onto a well-floured surface and knead it for about 5 minutes or until smooth and elastic.

2] Shape the dough into a round and place in a large oiled bowl. Brush the top with a little oil and cover with cling film. Leave to rest at room temperature for 20–25 minutes. Preheat the oven to 220°C/gas mark 7.

3] Meanwhile, make the topping. Put the tomatoes, oil, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Using your hands, squeeze the tomatoes to make a fine pulp. Set aside.

4] Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead just 3 or 4 times to knock out the air. Halve the dough and place each half in the centre of an oiled baking sheet. Use your fingertips to push each half out from the centre, stretching the dough to create 2 rounds about 25cm in diameter and 1–2cm thick. You can also use a rolling pin if you prefer. Make a small rim by pulling up the edges slightly.

5] Spread the tomato mixture evenly over the pizza bases, avoiding the rim, and top with the mozzarella. Bake for 12–14 minutes or until golden brown.

6] Remove from the oven, scatter over the basil and return to the oven for 1 further minute.

