



Regal Margherita Pizza

Inspired by Raffaele Esposito Italy 1889

Signature Recipe - Pizza Margherita

- 1/2 cup pureed or thick crushed tomatoes
- 1-1/2 Tablespoons prepared basil pesto, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon minced softened dried tomatoes
- 1 (27 ounce) package frozen cheese classic pizza
- 9 to 10 fresh Ciliegine (cherry size) fresh mozzarella balls, quartered
- 9 fresh grape size tomatoes, halved
- 12 small fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 Tablespoon prepared basil pesto, as desired

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Have insulated cookie sheet available to remove baked pizza from oven.

Prepare Thick Crushed Tomatoes: Drain the thick crushed tomatoes if they have lots of liquid; place 1/2 cup pureed tomatoes in medium bowl; stir in 1/2 Tablespoon pesto, Italian seasoning, granulated sugar, and fine minced soft dried tomatoes. Set aside.

Brush the Crust Edge: Remove wrapper from pizza. Place on large cookie sheet. Lightly brush the pizza crust edge with about 1 Tablespoon prepared basil pesto.

Pipe Two Circles: Place pureed tomato mixture in piping bag; pipe two concentric circles on the pizza, one 4 inch and the other 8-1/2-inch diameter.

Add Mini Mozzarella Quarters: Pat excess moisture with paper towel from mozzarella ball quarters, place mozzarella pieces rounded side against the edge of crust, leaving about 1/4-inch space between the cheese quarters, as the cheese will melt during baking.

Bake Pizza: Place pizza on oven rack in preheated 450-degree F oven for 15 minutes and bubbly. (We usually put a cookie sheet below the pizza in case there are any drips.)

Add Tomato Halves: Pat excess moisture from grape tomatoes halves. Place seed side up in a circle between the tomato sauce rings. Arrange basil leaves around the inside ring of grape tomatoes

Brush with Basil Pesto: Lightly brush the lightly cooled melted mozzarella cheese with remaining pesto sauce.

To Serve: Cut pizza into 6 to 8 slices with kitchen scissors. Serve hot.
Yield: about 8 slices

Cook's Note: If you have a special occasion, you can form one tomato slice into a heart shape after removing the inside pulp; then place the tomato heart inside the center circle on the pizza. It's a nice surprise! This pizza could never compare with the rigorous standards codified for pizzaiolos, but it's our salute to the rich flavors of red, white, and green.

Signature story and recipe comment can be found on p 35 and p.267 – In “*Signature Dishes That Matter*” book.

About the Recipe: The original recipe was never revealed. From all the historical information, we do know that it used crushed tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, and basil leaves. Just one taste and you will know why this type of pizza is still popular today.