## Classic Tomato, Mozzarella and Basil Pizza

Homemade Pizza Dough (page 84), or ± 1 kg store-bought pizza dough

## **TOPPINGS (PER PIZZA)**

Plain flour, for dusting the work surface

⅓–½ cup high-quality store-bought tomato pasta sauce (marinara sauce)

85–115 g fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced into 8-mm-thick rounds, then torn into pieces

3–4 tablespoons freshly grated pecorino romano cheese

5 or 6 large fresh basil leaves, torn into small pieces

Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling (optional)

Direct from your braai, here is a Naples-style pizza sporting a crispy, chewy crust with a few superb ingredients on top. We have provided a dough recipe, but to save time, you can purchase a kilogram of dough from a pizzeria or your local supermarket.







SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:
PIZZA STONE,
PIZZA PEEL



**1.** To make the pizza, prepare the braai for indirect cooking over high heat (230°–270°C). Position the pizza stone on the grate. Preheat the stone with the lid closed while you shape the pizza.



2. Lightly flour your hands and dust a pizza peel with flour, coating it thoroughly. On a lightly floured work surface, use your fingers to gently press and stretch one dough ball into a 20–23-cm round. (Don't use a rolling pin, as it will press too much air out of the dough.)



**3.** Pick up the dough at one edge with both hands, spacing your hands about 3 cm apart. Letting the dough droop onto the work surface, gently but quickly rotate the dough in one direction, as if turning a wheel, until you have a uniformly thin round.



**4.** If necessary, drape the dough over the backs of your hands and gently move them apart to stretch the dough further into a 30-cm round. Let gravity do most of the work of stretching the dough into shape.



**5.** Position the dough on the floured peel. If there are any holes, pinch them closed. Stretch the dough back into shape. Using the underside of a tablespoon, spread the sauce onto the dough, leaving a 1-cm border. Top evenly with the mozzarella and then the pecorino romano.



**6.** Shake the peel horizontally (just a jiggle) to be sure the pizza will slide. If it sticks, scatter some flour under the offending area. Don't top the dough with too much sauce or cheese as this will weigh it down, making it harder to slide onto the stone. As the cheese melts, it will spread over the surface.



**7.** Quickly slide the pizza off the peel onto the stone. Bake over **indirect high heat**, with the lid closed.



8. Cook until the base is crisp and has a scattering of dark brown spots and the topping is bubbling and browned, 7–9 minutes. (Check the underside after 5 minutes to ensure it is browning but not burning. If it is browning too quickly, use the peel to rotate it 180 degrees on the stone.)



**9.** Using the peel and tongs, transfer the pizza to a cutting board. Sprinkle with the basil and then drizzle with oil, if desired. Using a pizza wheel or large knife, cut the pizza into wedges and serve. Repeat the steps to shape, top, and cook the remaining pizzas.

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