

Welcome to Our "Good Life Page"

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Autumn is for Pizza Parties!

"In my family, Autumn means football season (Go Steelers!) and our favorite way to enjoy it is by serving homemade gourmet pizzas! I'm thrilled to teach you how to make wonderful handcrafted pizzas this month. It's easy, fun and your family and friends will love it. While there are countless topping combinations, I am sharing one of our all time favorites with you - White Pizza. Once you get the hand of creating the pizza dough, you can choose many creative combinations of toppings to make your each pizza deliciously unique.

This month my brother, Bruno, has chosen a delightful white wine - [Orvieto Classico](#), a terrific martini recipe [Quarenta y Tres](#) along with a smokin' hot cigar pick - [La Finca](#).

I hope you will enjoy this month's "Good Life" recipes and pairings with your family and friends for many years to come. Buon Appetito!" **Natalie**

Let's Make the Pizza!

The Basic Pizza Dough

This basic dough recipe is a great one to start with for your pizza making skills. It makes enough dough for 2 pizzas on 10" X 15" cookie sheets or 15" round pizza pans. If you own a bread maker, as I do, you can let it knead your dough for you! Let it go through the complete dough setting, but pull it out of the unit before it begins to bake. The exact time will depend on your machine. For variety, I will often substitute 1/2 cup or so of the flour with semolina flour. It gives the crust a wonderful complexity.



The best way to make pizza is to use a pizza stone and pizza peel. If you don't have these, you can simply use flat cookie sheets in the same way.

1 package active dry yeast or 2 1/2 teaspoons loose yeast
1 1/2 cups warm water, divided
4 cups unbleached or all-purpose flour, divided
1 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
pizza stone or flat cookie sheet
pizza peel or flat cookie sheet
rolling pin
corn meal (for dusting pizza peel)

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast with 1/4 cup of the warm water. Put flour and salt onto a floured surface. Make a

well in center of the flour. Add dissolved yeast, remaining water, and olive oil, gradually pulling flour into a the liquid. If the dough seems a little sticky, add a bit more flour. Flour absorbs less liquid in humid weather, but remember that using too much will produce a dry, dense crust. Knead for 6 to 8 minutes, or until smooth and elastic. Shape the dough into a ball and put in an oiled bowl, roll to coat with oil and cover with a thick towel. Let rise in a warm place free from drafts for 1 to 1 1/2 hours or until doubled in size.

Now, preheat oven to 400 degrees with the pizza stone (or flat cookie sheet in the oven) on lowest rack.

Remove the risen dough from the bowl and put onto a floured surface. Divide in half for 2 pizzas. Sprinkle the bottom of your pizza peel generously with cornmeal to allow the pizza to slip from the peel to the stone in the oven easily. With a rolling pin, roll out the dough for each a little larger than the size you desire and turn under the edges all around to create an edge to prevent toppings from rolling off.

Carefully lift the dough and place in onto the cornmeal coated pizza peel.

I personally like my pizzas to have an authentic free-form shape, so I do not try to make my pizzas perfectly round!

White Pizza Topping Ingredients



2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, finely minced
8 ounces ricotta cheese
8 ounces fresh baby spinach, which you have steamed for 2 to 3 minutes, squeezed thoroughly to eliminate in water and then slivered
2 tablespoons Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of dry red pepper flakes (optional)
4 ounces sliced salami (optional)

Brush the tops of the pizza dough with the olive oil and sprinkle the minced garlic on top. Spread each pizza with the ricotta, followed by the spinach, then the Parmigiano

cheese, salt and pepper, a pinch of crushed red pepper if desired and finally the salami if desired.

Carefully slide the pizza from the peel onto the heated stone in the oven. Bake until the toppings are bubbly. Keep your eye on it! It usually takes 15 to 20 minutes. Now use your pizza peel to carefully slide the pizza from the stone in the oven onto the peel. Slide the pizza right onto a cutting board or pan right where your guest are seated! Slice it, add a sprinkle of extra cheese and watch it disappear.

Makes 2 Pizzas

Suggested Wine Pairing: By Bruno Schirripa



Ruffino Orvieto Classico - Umbria, Italy

My wife and I stumbled across this little gem of a wine on a trip to our local wine store. They where sampling and, by gosh we where tasting. This wine is produced by Ruffino in Umbria Italy. My first impression was fresh and clean with a very well balanced flavor of citrus and green apple. The aroma was pleasant and fragrant and I picked up a slight hint of sage. We served chicken to our guests a few nights later and the response to the flavor combination was a big WOW. We had some seafood and sampled Orvieto and experienced the same wow factor. Our research continued after dinner when we finished the bottle on the deck. EXCELLENT! So is the price.

Suggested After Dinner Pleasures: By Bruno Schirripa



La Finca

"La Finca an all Nicaraguan puro has been handcrafted since 1972 in Esteli, Nicaragua. Medium in body with a nutty, naturally sweet flavor, this cigar is well-balanced in flavor. I am a fan of the sweeter Maduro wrapper but it is equally as pleasant in the lighten natural wrapper."



Quarenta y Tres (43)

"My after dinner delight beverage this month is a very sweet and flavorful liquor we found in Cabo San Lucas, QUARENTA y TRES (43). This is a very flavorful liquor distilled with Vanilla and Almond. It is a bit sweet but dilutes well with Patron Espresso Tequilla. Make sure your driving :-)"

Enjoy!

Bruno

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Natalie (Schirripa) Decker
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"Sometimes we get so busy with business and with life that we forget to stop and enjoy the good things in life - "la vita bella", as we call it in Italian. So, I thought it would be fun to share one of my favorite passions with you each month - authentic southern Italian recipes - just like my mother and grandmothers taught me growing up. My brother, Bruno Schirripa, and I love to cook together, so I am thrilled that he will be contributing the monthly wine pairing and after dinner cigar pick to accompany my recipes. My husband, Steve, is not much into the cooking aspect, but he is definitely an expert "tester" and especially enjoys the after dinner pleasures. We hope you will enjoy and share it all each month with your family and friends!"



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