

Grilled Pepperoni Pizza

Sure, your grill is a great way to cook a hunk of meat. But it can do so much more. Grilled pizzas are fun, fast and completely customizable for a crowd. This cracker-thin crust is the perfect vehicle for whatever genius combination you come up with. Experiment with different salami and cheeses, peppers or herbs. Or follow our lead. Pizza perfect. At least we think so.

See Cook's Note on pizza dough.

Ingredients

dough

5 cups all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 teaspoons sugar
1¼ teaspoons active dry yeast
1¾ cups room temperature water
9 tablespoons olive oil

toppings

1½ cups strained tomato sauce
1 teaspoon kosher salt
3 Italian frying peppers, halved lengthwise and seeded
Olive oil, for coating
1½ cups fresh ricotta cheese
¾ cup grated pecorino cheese
6 ounces sliced pepperoni
¼ cup minced fresh marjoram or oregano
Crushed red chile flakes, optional

special equipment

stand mixer
charcoal or gas grill

Directions

for the dough

Put the flour, salt, sugar, yeast, water and 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook attachment. Turn on low speed and mix until it forms a ball and picks up all the flour in the bowl, about 2 minutes. Turn off the mixer and let the dough rest for 15 minutes. Raise the speed of the mixer to medium-low and mix until the dough is smooth, slaps the sides, doesn't stick to your fingers but is still tacky, and can pass the windowpane test, anywhere from 4 minutes to 12.

What's the windowpane test? It's a way to tell if the ingredients have evenly distributed and the gluten has developed properly. Tear off a small piece of dough and pull and stretch it, rotating it, to see if you can make a super thin, transparent "window" without it tearing. If it does tear, mix it for another minute or two until you get that window when you try again. If the dough seems to sticky, sprinkle in a little flour. If it seems too dry, add a little water.

Evenly divide the dough into 6 balls. Pour 1 tablespoon of the remaining oil into each of 6 quart-size zip-top bags, plop the dough into the bag and turn to coat with the oil. Seal and refrigerate at least 6 to 8 hours, or overnight if possible.

Remove the dough at least 2 hours before you want to grill so it has time to warm up.

for the toppings and grilling

Mix the strained tomatoes with the salt.

Have a small cutting board outside for slicing the chiles after they're grilled. Have another large cutting board for landing the finished pizzas. Have all your toppings measured and ready to go – you have to work fast!

Fill a chimney with briquettes and light. When they ash over, dump the coals into a pile on one side of the grill. Move some of the coals to the other side, creating a slope of coals for high heat and low heat. Let the grill get hot enough so you can only hold your hand over it for 1 second. Alternately, heat a gas grill, half (or two-thirds) on medium-high and then low heat on the other side.

Lightly coat the chiles in oil and grill, (covered if using a gas grill) turning halfway through, until they soften, char and blister, about 7 minutes, pressing down with tongs to get the insides charred. Remove to the small cutting board and thinly slice.

Take one of the dough balls out of the bag and put on a flipped over baking sheet. Press and flatten out with your fingertips until it's evenly thin and roughly the shape of the space above the coals, 12 to 15 inches. Take one side of the dough and quickly lay on the hot side of the grill. Cook until the dough bubbles and the bottom browns nicely, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip it over to the indirect side of the grill.

Right away, top with 1/4 cup ricotta, 1/4 cup of tomato sauce, 1 tablespoon of pecorino, 1 ounce (about 12 slices) of pepperoni, 2 tablespoons of chiles, 1 more tablespoon of pecorino and 2 teaspoons of marjoram, and red chile flakes if using. This should take 2 to 3 minutes. Cover, leaving the vents open, and cook, shifting the pizza around over the coals for even cooking, until the bottom is browned and the toppings bubble, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove to the large cutting board and cut into squares.

Repeat with the remaining 5 dough balls. Or if you prefer, freeze what you don't use for future cookouts.

Cook's Note

The longer the dough rests in the refrigerator, or retards, the more flavor it will have. If you want to make the dough the same day, try to allow 6 or 8 hours in the fridge so the flavors can develop. And be sure to allow the dough to ferment, or sit at room temperature, for 2 hours before baking to ensure a good rise.

total time: 1 hour 45 minutes, plus resting time

active prep: 1 hour 45 minutes

serves: 6

difficulty: *medium*