

Socca Pizza

Ingredients

1 cup (120 grams, about 4 ounces) chickpea (garbanzo bean) flour

1 cup water

¼ cup olive oil

1-2 cloves garlic, pressed, minced or grated

¼ teaspoon sea salt

PIZZA TOPPINGS

½ medium onion, yellow or red, thinly sliced

1 cup dried tomatoes

12 pitted Kalamata olives, sliced in half lengthwise

4 teaspoons fresh rosemary, minced

optional: thin asparagus spears

optional: zucchini or summer squash, ribboned with a vegetable peeler or julienne peeler and lightly tossed with olive oil

optional: fresh basil

Method

1. In a bowl, whisk together the chickpea flour, water, 2 tablespoons olive oil, garlic and salt. Let the mixture rest at room temperature for 1 hour.

2. Place dried tomatoes in a bowl and pour on boiling water just to cover. Place a small plate on top of the bowl and let sit for about 15 minutes to rehydrate tomatoes. Drain off the soaking liquid and keep for a soup broth or drink it post-haste.

3. Turn on the broiler with a rack positioned 8 inches from heat. Place a 10 inch ovenproof skillet (preferably cast iron) in the oven to preheat.

4. Once the skillet is hot, carefully remove it from the oven (it's crazy hot, wear oven mitts!). Pour in one tablespoon olive oil and swirl the pan around so the heat is evenly distributed. Pour in the chickpea batter and return the skillet to the broiler. Bake for 5 to 8 minutes, until the socca is set and the edges are beginning to brown and pull away from the sides of the pan. Remove from oven, turn off broiler and turn oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.

5. Spread the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil on top of the socca (it will soak right in). Top the socca with rehydrated tomatoes, onion slices, and olives in that order. If using ribboned/julienned squash, place it as the bottom layer atop the socca.

6. Return the skillet to the oven and bake for 8 to 10 minutes, until the socca is crisp. Remove from the oven and sprinkle fresh rosemary or basil on top. Let the pizza cool for 2 to 3 minutes before slicing into 4 pieces and serving.

Notes



It almost takes longer to describe the history and multitude of names for this chickpea crepe/pancake/flatbread than it does to make it! Briefly, after a battle between Pisa and Genoa with Genoa coming out on the winner, The Genoese ships were hit by a terrible storm. Barrels of chickpea flour stored below were broken open and mixed with seawater that rushed in. After the storm, sailors who relied on their chickpea larder scooped up the messy mix and dried it up on the deck. They liked it so much that they continued to bake “L’Oro di Pisa” (Pisan gold) once they got back home.

This popular street food is enjoyed along the Ligurian Sea coast from Nice, France to the Italian islands of Elba and Sardinia in the Mediterranean. It is called ‘socca’ in the French Riviera, ‘fainâ’ in Genoa, ‘fainé genovese’ in Sardinia and ‘cecina’ in Tuscany after the Italian ‘ceci’ for chickpeas. With migration of Ligurian people to Argentina and Uruguay in the 19th and 20th centuries, it is known as fainá and may be found as a pizza topping itself. Algeria has its similar Karantita topped with cumin and harissa. In India or Indian markets look for Bengal gram, gram flour or besan flour and you will have chickpea flour. So the lovely chickpea really gets around and, with various vegetables and spices favored in each region, is the base for endless versions of something really delicious and easy.

Really, just plan ahead one short hour to let the batter sit while you prepare a few toppings and still have time to do a few non-kitchen things if you like.

Source: kathryne Taylor, cookieandkate.com (Servings: 4 | Yield: 9 to 10 inch pizza)

