

Upper Bench Cheesy Pizza

Shana and Gavin Miller have always loved to cook at home with their two kids, and pizza has long been a favourite food. That's why they created the beautiful wood-fired pizza oven at their seasonal patio eatery, The Oven, at Upper Bench Winery & Creamery. Former pizza maestro at The Oven, Daniel Johansson, shared this delicious pizza dough recipe with toppings from one of the house specials, featuring—you guessed it—cheese!

Makes 2 large pizza dough balls and topping for 1 pizza

Pizza Dough:

1½ tsp active dry yeast
1 Tbsp sea salt
1½ tsp olive oil
3¾ cups Italian “00” flour
¼ cup whole-wheat flour

Pizza:

Olive oil, for brushing
1 ball pizza dough (recipe above)
1 basil leaf
2 oz Upper Bench U&Brie cheese, sliced
2 oz Upper Bench Gold cheese, sliced
2 oz Upper Bench Okanagan Sun cheese, sliced
Handful of arugula
Maldon sea salt and pepper
Drizzle of lemon olive oil (see note)

Notes: If you don't have lemon olive oil, substitute a squeeze of lemon and a drizzle of good olive oil. The toppings are scaled for one pizza—feel free to multiply as needed!

For the Pizza Dough:

In a small bowl, stir the yeast into ¼ cup of warm water. Let sit for 5 minutes to activate.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, combine 1¼ cups of warm water with the salt and olive oil and gently stir until all the salt has dissolved. Add the activated yeast water to the mixing bowl.

Blend at low speed and gradually add the flours until the mixture comes together into a ball. The dough should be soft, flexible and not too sticky, or too elastic. Depending on the water and flour, this should take about 5–7 minutes.

Using your hands, knead and shape the dough into a ball on the counter to get a smooth skin. Return it to the bowl, cover with a damp cloth and leave for at least 2 hours.

Remove the dough from the bowl and shape into two balls. Wrap the balls in plastic wrap and let sit for 6–8 hours on the counter (the dough also freezes well).

For the Pizza:

Preheat the oven to 550°F. Prepare a pizza stone or baking sheet by brushing with olive oil.

On the prepared pizza stone or baking sheet, form the pizza ball into a disc, using your fingers to press it into shape. Brush on some olive oil, using the basil leaf to spread the oil around, then lay the cheese slices evenly over the pizza.

Bake until the crust is golden brown and the cheese is all melted and bubbly, about 8–12 minutes, rotating the pizza stone or baking sheet halfway through for even cooking.

Remove from the oven and top with arugula, Maldon sea salt, pepper and a drizzle of lemon olive oil.

