

INDIVIDUAL PLANK PIZZAS

Serves 2 to 4

Mini-pizzas offer the perfect opportunity to taste a variety of more exotic toppings (feta cheese, shrimp, turkey sausage rounds, marinated artichokes, etc.). You don't have to make a 12-inch commitment. You can try out whatever strikes your fancy to create a signature pizza or customize pizzas for individual family members. Mini-pizzas cut into small wedges also make excellent party appetizers.

1 pound frozen white or wheat bread dough, thawed
Cornmeal
2 tablespoons Italian tomato paste
1 cup favorite toppings (see below for suggestions)
1 1/3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Cornmeal

Heat oven and plank to 350° F.

For best results, thaw bread dough slowly in the refrigerator. (Bread dough is usually available in packages of three, 1-pound loaves, so remove one and keep the remainder frozen.)

Divide dough into four pieces. On a cornmeal-dusted surface, roll each piece into a 6-inch circle. Spread tomato paste on each round; top with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of toppings and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cheese. Don't overload the toppings because the bottom of the pizza will not cook through on the plank.

Transfer two of the pizzas to the heated plank with a wide spatula (let the other two rest on the counter). Bake for about 30 minutes or until the bottoms of the pizzas are browned and cooked through. Repeat with the other two pizzas.

Suggested Toppings: crumbled bacon, crumbled or rounds of cooked chicken-turkey or pork sausage; diced pepperoni; sliced or chopped ripe or Spanish olives; sautéed onion; sliced mushrooms; roasted bell pepper; chopped fresh herbs.

Cook's Note: Substitute pesto for tomato paste for a different sauce base.