

My Big Fat Greek Pizza – Comfort du Jour

The flavors of Greek culture are so bold and fresh, and I cannot resist applying them to foods that don't necessarily speak Greek, including this inspired pizza. I used up a leftover "Greek God" sausage (pork, seasoned with herbs and garlic), plus all my favorite Mediterranean flavors—spinach, onions, Kalamata olives, cherry tomatoes and a whole bunch of fresh feta! But my favorite part was the dollops of cool tzatziki that went into place *after* the pizza emerged from the oven. The combination of all these ingredients was like a flavor explosion, giving me my very own Greek festival, all in one bite. Opa!!!

INGREDIENTS

Tzatziki:

1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt, stirred
2 Tbsp. half and half
1/4 cup diced cucumber, patted dry
1 or 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
1 Tbsp. fresh dill leaves, chopped (chop some extra for sprinkling over the finished pizza)

Combine ingredients and keep refrigerated until ready to serve pizza.

Pizza:

1 ball pizza dough (here's a link for [My Real N.Y. Pizza Dough](#)*, if you'd like to try it)
About 1/4 cup pizza sauce or fresh tomato sauce
A few shakes of grated [parm-romano blend](#)
1/2 cup shredded firm mozzarella
1 link cooked and sliced Greek God sausage* or similar product (see notes)
1/2 medium red onion, sliced
1 fat handful baby spinach leaves
Handful of pitted Kalamata olives*, roughly chopped
6 or 7 cherry or grape tomatoes, washed and halved
3/4 cup fresh feta, crumbled*
Additional chopped fresh dill, for serving

*NOTES

If you decide to try my version of N.Y. pizza dough, note that it takes a few days' time in the fridge, so plan accordingly. This recipe is intended for a thin-crust pizza, and my heating and bake time instructions are specific to baking on a pizza steel or stone. If you prefer to bake on a pan or at lower temperature, adjust your baking time to your preferred method.

The "Greek God" sausage I used for this pizza is a specialty product from a specific local grocery. It is a fresh pork sausage, seasoned with basil, oregano, garlic and rosemary, and we cooked (actually, smoked) it prior to using it. Any mild pork, chicken or turkey sausage would make a fine substitute, or you could easily omit the sausage altogether. The other flavors on this pizza are more than enough to elevate your happy.

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Kalamata olives are specifically grown in the Kalamata region of Greece, and they are not the same as inexpensive, canned “black” olives. They are more oblong than round, and they are usually packed in a briny liquid with wine or olive oil. It’s easy to find them in jars or on specialty olive bars, if your supermarket has one. They can be a little pricey, but as far as I’m concerned, they are worth their weight in gold. Be sure to select pitted olives for this recipe, unless you find it exciting to crack a tooth.

I prefer to use fresh blocks of feta, as it has better flavor and texture than most crumbled feta. If the feta block is packed in brine, be sure to pat it dry with paper towels before crumbling, to minimize excess moisture.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat pizza steel for one hour at 550° F, or the recommended temperature for your pizza stone, with oven rack about 8 inches from the top heat element. If using a metal pan, place rack in lower third of oven.
2. Prepare toppings: sauté red onion just until softened, then sauté spinach until wilted. Transfer both to a dish to cool.
3. Shape pizza dough into a 14-inch round and transfer to a floured pizza peel that is dusted with cornmeal (or place on a greased pizza pan). Brush or spray dough with olive oil, and season with kosher salt and a few twists of black pepper.
4. Spread tomato sauce evenly over the dough, all but 1 inch around edge.
5. Distribute the shredded mozzarella, then the cut-up, cooked sausage pieces (if using), onions and spinach, Kalamatas, tomatoes and feta cheese.
6. Transfer pizza to preheated steel or stone, and bake for about 7 minutes, until crust is golden brown and toppings are bubbling.
7. Arrange small dollops of tzatziki sauce over pizza, sprinkle with remaining dill leaves.