

SUMMER FLAVOR



Tri-Pepper Basil Pizza

Bell peppers have a slightly sweet taste and a crisp texture, making these brightly colored vegetables pleasing to the eyes and the palate. As a source of vitamins, especially A and C, and antioxidants like carotenoids, these popular veggies are nutrition-packed with only about 30 calories in one pepper. Plus, their versatility makes them a fun addition to nearly every meal. Add color and nutrients to a healthier homemade pizza with this recipe.

SERVES: 6 - 8

INGREDIENTS:

1-2 cloves	Garlic, minced
1 large	Prepared whole-wheat pizza crust, refrigerated dough or recipe
2 tbsp.	Cornmeal
3 small	Bell peppers (green, red, yellow or orange sliced)
1 15-oz. can	Fire-roasted tomatoes (no salt added)
½ tsp.	Dried oregano
¼ tsp.	Red pepper flakes (more to taste)

To taste	Black pepper
Dash	Salt
½ cup	Fresh basil, chopped
1 cup	Part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded

Optional toppings:

½ sliced red onion, mushrooms, jalapenos, 1 cooked and shredded chicken breast, artichoke hearts, olives, etc.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Coat a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray, or place a pizza stone in the oven to preheat.
2. In a blender or food processor, chop tomatoes, garlic, basil and seasonings. If sauce is too thin, add tomato paste to reach desired consistency.
3. If using prepared crust, follow package instructions. With homemade or refrigerated dough, dust baking sheet with cornmeal and roll dough to 12-16" diameter for round or form to fit a rectangular sheet. Bake for 5-10 minutes before adding toppings.
4. Top with tomato sauce (you may have some leftover), sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ the cheese, top with the sliced peppers and other veggies if using, sprinkle with remaining cheese and bake 8-15 minutes or until crust is lightly browned and cheese is melted. Serve with a mixed green salad of cucumber, carrots and tomato.

ALTERNATIVES:

- Slice peppers and eat as a snack or side with 2 tbsp. hummus or salsa. Add sliced peppers to a salads, soups, chilies, stews or whole-wheat sandwiches and wraps.
- Lightly sauté peppers, onions and mushrooms to serve with whole-wheat pasta, brown rice or with baked chicken or fish as fajita toppings.
- Stuff seeded peppers with cooked veggies (onion, tomatoes, celery, peppers, beans, etc.), a whole grain or lean ground turkey or beef. Sprinkle with 1-2 tbsp. cheese and bake until pepper is tender.
- Grill peppers with onion, corn and summer zucchini and squash for a flavorful side to grilled chicken or fish.

