



*Picture yourself pulling the topping off of your mushroom pizza. It all clings together – the meaty mushrooms and gooey cheese, maybe some hot peppers or pepperoni, a smattering of sauce. All the best parts – right? Welcome to my portobello pizza recipe! It's everything you love about a mushroom pizza, without the crust, and it can be ready in 30 minutes or less.*

### **Portobello Pizza**

Mushroom pizza is my hands-down favorite, and here I nod to my forever friend, Alison, who taught me the ways of mushroom pizza back in the early 80s. These days, I'm excited to enjoy my first-choice topping in a mushroom-forward (wave bye to the bread) way. By using the portobello cap as the base for my pizza, I honor my favorite ingredient, savor the best flavors of a traditional pie, present a dish that can be customized for family and friends (as long as you like mushrooms!) and put a new twist on a favorite from the old days.

### **Ingredients**

Portobello mushroom caps (1 to 2 per person)

4 to 5 oz marinara sauce (about 2 Tablespoons per cap)

1 to 2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded

½ cup parmesan cheese

Crushed red peppers (optional)

Extra virgin olive oil (1 -2 Tablespoons)

Kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with foil and, if available, add a wire cooling rack to the pan. Put the baking sheet / rack into the oven while it is pre-heating. This way you start with a hot surface!

Prepare the mushrooms. First, use a damp towel to wipe off any dirt on the mushroom cap. Then scoop out the gills with a small spoon. I do this over paper towels because the gills are messy. Be extra gentle

while scooping, especially toward the edges of the mushroom because the edges will tear easily, and you want them to stay intact if possible. If there's a stem, cut it off at the base of the mushroom, taking care not to cut into the cap.

Lightly oil the mushroom and sprinkle (very lightly) with salt (both sides). When the oven is heated to temperature, put the mushrooms on the rack – scooped side down – and bake for 10 – 12 minutes. The mushroom will release some of its water, so if the scooped side is down to start, the liquid will drain into your baking sheet. After 10 – 12 minutes, carefully flip each mushroom and bake for 5 more minutes. Now the scooped side is up!

After 5 minutes, remove the pan / rack from the oven and take a look at your mushrooms (don't move them unless you need to). If you see liquid collected in the bowl of a mushroom, tip it gently to drain, or dab with a paper towel.

Build your pizzas on the hot pan / rack. Add a couple tablespoons of sauce (to your liking) into the bowl of the cap, followed by the mozzarella and the parmesan.

If you wish, top with pepperoni or bacon or vegetables. Be creative! **Please make sure that any meat or poultry you add is already cooked and ready to eat**, because the mushrooms do not spend enough time in the oven to cook raw meat / poultry to a safe temperature.

With toppings in place, put the mushrooms back in the oven and broil for 2 -3 minutes until the cheese is melted. Keep an eye out! Broiling goes fast! If you don't have a broiler, go ahead and bake the mushrooms for several minutes until the cheese melts. Serve when your mushrooms look like cheesy little personal pizzas. Garnish with crushed red peppers (optional).

In less than 30 minutes, you have cute little pizza-tasting portobello pies! Have a slice for me!

Tips: Use a very flavorful marinara or pizza sauce. With so few ingredients, each component needs to shine. Also, it helps to warm the sauce in the microwave right before putting it into the mushroom. This step isn't mandatory, but it ensures that every level of the pizza is hot.

Remember! Pre-cook any meats that you add to the pizzas – this is super important (see above). If you use vegetables that have a lot of water (spinach, for example), pre-cook and drain well. Have fun with the possibilities, and if you create an awesome combination, send me an email with the details!

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