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Sausage and Mushroom Calzones

Makes 4 calzones.

With its combination of spicy and earthy flavors, this calzone is pure comfort food on a winter's evening.

- 1 recipe basic calzone crust (below)
- 12 oz. Italian sausage, removed from casings and crumbled
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 recipe basic pizza sauce (below)
(slightly less than 1 cup of sauce)
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 4 tsp. finely grated Parmesan

Preheat oven to 450°F (230°C). While the dough is resting, prepare the filling. Brown the crumbled sausage meat and mushroom slices in olive oil for 5 to 6 minutes, until sausage is cooked through. Add pizza sauce.

Follow the instructions for rolling the dough into 4 equal circles. Using a pastry brush, glaze the top edge of the circles with water. Spoon 1/4 of the filling onto the lower half of each circle. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup mozzarella. Fold the top over so that the edge of the top sits 1/2 in. (1 cm.) away from the bottom half. Lightly glaze the edge of the top piece and fold the bottom over to seal tightly. Make a 1/2-in. (1-cm.) slit in the top to allow steam to escape. Brush tops with melted butter and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon Parmesan. Place the calzones on a preheated baking stone or on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and bake on the middle rack for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the filling is hot and the crust is golden brown.

(continued on the next page)



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Sausage and Mushroom Calzones, (continued)

Basic Calzone Crust

This dough may be used for all types of calzones.

1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1-1/2 cups bread flour
1 tsp. granulated sugar
2 tsp. quick-rise yeast
1 tsp. salt
1-1/2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup warm water

To prepare the calzone dough, combine 2 cups of the flour with the sugar, yeast, and salt in bowl of standing mixer. Set aside. Combine olive oil and warm water, Using paddle attachment, slowly stir the water and oil into the flour mixture until well combined. Mix in 1 cup of flour.

Change to dough hook attachment and knead on low for 4 to 5 minutes, until dough comes together as a ball and is smooth and elastic. If not using a standing mixer, turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead by hand for about 10 minutes. Place dough in lightly oiled bowl and cover with clean paper towel. Set aside for 10 minutes.

When the dough has rested for 10 minutes, punch it down. Using a sharp knife, cut the dough into 4 equal pieces. Shape each into a ball, flatten down to form a disc, and lightly flour each disc.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out each disc 1/8-in. (0.5-cm.) thick and 6 in. (15 cm) round. Add flour as necessary to prevent sticking.

Basic Pizza Sauce - Makes approximately 1-2/3 cups sauce.

This simple and delicious sauce is used as the base for most pizzas.

3 tbsp. olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
28-oz. can whole tomatoes
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. dried oregano or 1 tbsp chopped fresh oregano
Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes

To prepare the sauce, heat oil in large heavy frying pan. Add garlic and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and break them up into small chunks with wooden spoon. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, until most of the liquid has evaporated and sauce has thickened. Add salt, oregano, and red pepper flakes to taste.