



Pissaladière

This classic dish hails from the city of Nice and is often referred to as Niçoise pizza. Its thin bread base is similar to focaccia and the sweetness of the caramelised onions contrasts beautifully with the salty anchovies and olives. The name comes from pissalat, meaning 'salted fish' in the Niçoise dialect, a reference to the purée of anchovies and olive oil flavoured with cloves, thyme, bay and pepper that was traditionally brushed over the topping. Make sure the onions are tender and just a pale golden colour, they shouldn't be dark like caramelised onions or they'll burn while the tart is baking. If you don't like anchovies (or for a vegetarian version), substitute thin strips of roasted red capsicum (see how to roast a capsicum video below). Some recipes shortcut by using ready-made shortcrust pastry as the base but I've always found that the bread dough gives a much better result.

Serves 4 as a starter

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 600g brown onions, very thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 4 sprigs thyme, leaves picked (about 2 teaspoons)
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 15g anchovy fillets (drained weight; about 8 fillets)
- 10 small olives

Dough

- 7g dried yeast
- Pinch castor sugar
- 220ml lukewarm water
- 370g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 teaspoon salt flakes, crushed
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for rubbing

METHOD

1. Make Dough: Combine yeast, sugar and a tablespoon of the warm water in a small bowl and set aside in a warm place for 10 minutes or so until it froths.
2. Place flour into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook and add salt.
3. Make a well in the centre, add yeast mixture, remaining water and oil and mix for about 5 minutes to form a smooth, slightly sticky dough.
4. Shape into a ball, rub lightly in oil, place into a clean bowl, cover and set aside in a warm place for an hour or so, until doubled in size.
5. Meanwhile, heat oil in a frying pan, add onion and a good pinch of salt.
6. Cover and cook over a low heat for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until very soft.
7. Uncover, stir in garlic, thyme and pepper and cook for a further 10 minutes or so, stirring often, until lightly golden. Set aside to cool.
8. Cut anchovies in half lengthways; set aside.
9. Preheat oven to 240°C.
10. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 1cm-thick rectangle.
11. Place on a baking paper-lined baking tray.
12. Spread onion mixture over the top, leaving a 1cm border around the edges.
13. Arrange anchovies in a crosshatch pattern to form diamonds and place an olive in the centre of the diamonds.
14. Place tray in the oven, reduce heat to 230°C and bake for 15–20 minutes until dough is golden.
15. Cut into strips and serve warm.

