

Cheesy Stuffed Crust Supreme Deep-Dish Pizza – Comfort du Jour

This pizza, which I have dubbed “Go Big or Go Home,” is the answer to all my pizza dreams. The crust is stuffed with strips of string cheese, and the toppings included pepperoni, but also sausage, peppers, onions, mushrooms, tomatoes and *more* cheese. It takes a deep dish to hold all this ooey-goey goodness!

INGREDIENTS

1 recipe deep dish pizza dough (see my previous post for **Chicago Deep Dish** or use your own)
3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
5 sticks of mozzarella string cheese, pulled apart into about three strips for each
1 cup shredded whole milk mozzarella, divided
Several shakes of your favorite Italian seasoning blend
1/2 cup cooked Italian sausage (we used a spicy variety)
1/2 green bell pepper, chopped and sauteed
1/2 medium yellow onion, chopped and sauteed
About 20 pieces thinly sliced pepperoni
1/2 large can San Marzano tomatoes, drained and squeezed by hand
A few spoonfuls of your favorite prepared pizza sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 450° F, with oven rack in center position.
2. Add olive oil to a 14-inch, deep dish pizza pan and swirl it around. Shape the pizza dough, leaving as much extra dough around the edges as possible.
3. Arrange the strips of string cheese, overlapped so there is plenty of thickness all the way around the edges of the pizza dough. Gently press and pull the edges of dough over the string cheese and press to seal it to the base of the dough. Portion half of the shredded mozzarella onto the base and use your hands to press it firmly into the base of the pizza and also to cover the stuffed crust seam.
4. Layer on the cooked Italian sausage, then the peppers, onions and mushrooms. Arrange slices of pepperoni generously all over the pizza. Scatter the crushed canned tomatoes randomly over the pepperoni, and then drop a few spoonfuls of pizza sauce in-between the tomatoes.
5. Sprinkle the pizza, including the dough around the edges, with your favorite Italian seasoning blend. Sprinkle the rest of the shredded mozzarella, along with any remaining strips of string cheese, on top of the pizza.
6. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbling. The cheese will be lightly browned and bubbling also. Let the pizza cool in the pan for about 8 minutes before transferring it to a pizza tray. We use a large pancake turner and a wide fish spatula to get under the pizza to move it. Alternatively, cut the pizza right in the pan and serve up the wedges.