

FROM SARDINIA

Pizzette alla Cagliariaritana

SMALL PIZZAS, CAGLIARI STYLE

MAKES 14.

FOR THE SPONGE

- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 ounce fresh compressed yeast or 1 package active dry yeast
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup lukewarm milk, or warm milk if using dry yeast
- A pinch of salt

FOR THE DOUGH (SECOND RISING)

- 4 ounces all-purpose potatoes
- Coarse-grained salt
- 4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

- 1 extra-large egg
- 1 cup lukewarm milk
- Salt to taste

FOR THE DOUGH (THIRD RISING)

- About $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unbleached all-purpose flour

FOR THE TOPPING

- 8 ounces mozzarella, cut into 14 slices
- 2 large tomatoes, blanched (see Note, page 40), seeded and cut into small pieces

- 7 whole anchovies, preserved in salt, boned and cleaned (see Note, page 30), or 14 anchovy fillets, packed in oil, drained

- 14 teaspoons freshly grated *Pecorino Romano*

- 14 pinches of dried oregano mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper

- 14 teaspoons olive oil

FOR BAKING

- 3 tablespoons olive oil

Prepare the sponge: Place the cup of flour in a small bowl and make a well in the center. Dissolve the yeast in the milk, stirring with a wooden spoon. Add the pinch of salt. Pour the dissolved yeast into the well and mix very well with the wooden spoon until the flour is incorporated. Sprinkle the additional tablespoon of flour over the sponge, cover the bowl with a cotton dish towel and let rest, in a warm place away from drafts, until the sponge has doubled in size, about 1 hour. (Signs that the sponge has doubled in size are the disappearance of the tablespoon of flour or the formation of large cracks on top.)

Meanwhile, bring a medium-sized pot of cold water to a boil. Add coarse salt to taste, then the unpeeled potatoes, and cook until they are very soft, about 25 minutes. Peel the potatoes and pass them, still very hot, through a potato ricer into a bowl.

Prepare the dough: Place the 4 cups of flour in a mound on a board, then make a well in the center. Place the sponge in the well, along with the riced potatoes, the whole egg, the milk and salt to taste. Mix together thoroughly all the ingredients in the well, then start incorporating some of the flour from the edges. When a ball of dough is formed, start kneading it with the palms of your hands until the dough becomes very elastic and all the flour is incorporated, about 2 minutes. Place the dough in a very lightly oiled bowl, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let rest, in a warm place away from drafts, for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. By that time the dough should have risen, but not doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Oil 2 15-by-10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch jelly-roll pans.

Place the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour for the third rising on a board. Transfer the dough to the board and start kneading, incorporating more flour for at least 10 minutes. Divide the dough into 14 pieces and knead each piece for a few seconds. Roll out each piece of dough into a disc about 5 inches in diameter. Transfer the *pizzette* to the prepared pans. Cover pans with plastic wrap and top with a cotton dish towel. Let rest for 10 minutes.

Remove plastic wrap and dish towel and top each *pizzetta* with a slice of mozzarella, then sprinkle with some cut-up tomato, 1 anchovy fillet cut into small pieces, a teaspoon of the grated cheese and then a teaspoon of the oil. Sprinkle with a little of the oregano mixture. Bake for 25 minutes and serve hot.

