

Italian Broccoli Rabe Pizza

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In Southern Italy, pizza is often simple. It starts with good dough, olive oil, and what is in season. Italian broccoli rabe pizza (**Cime di rapa**), is a common topping and is loved for its slightly bitter flavor.

This is the kind of pizza I make at home. After many years working in restaurant kitchens, I learned that Italian cooking does not need a lot of ingredients. It needs balance. For this pizza, Italian sausage adds flavor, while **cannellini beans** make it hearty without feeling heavy.

Everything is cooked together in one pan before going on the pizza. The result is a rustic, olive oil-based pizza that is simple, comforting, and very Italian.

Things to know about this Italian Broccoli Rabe Pizza

- **Blanching the broccoli rabe matters**

A quick blanch removes excess bitterness while keeping its signature flavor intact.

- **Everything cooks in one pan**

Cooking the garlic, sausage, broccoli rabe, and cannellini beans together allows the flavors to layer naturally—no need to remove ingredients or overcomplicate the process

- **Cannellini beans are traditional, not modern**

Beans have long been used in Southern Italy to stretch meals and add body. Lightly mashing a few into the pan creates a natural creaminess without sauce.

*(If you enjoy beans on pizza, you may also like my **Italian Escarole and Beans with Sausage** post.)*

- **Minimal cheese is intentional**

This pizza is olive-oil based. If you use cheese, keep it light—just enough to enhance, not dominate.

*(For dough texture that works best with oil-based toppings, use my over night **Pizza Dough Recipe***

Italian Broccoli Rabe Pizza



- 1 lb. 450 g broccoli rabe, trimmed
- 3 tbsp olive oil (plus more for brushing)
- 3 cloves garlic (thinly sliced)
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- 6 oz 170 g Italian sausage, casings removed
- ½ cup cannellini beans (drained and rinsed)
- Salt (to taste)
- 12 oz 340 g pizza dough (homemade or store-bought – use my [Pizza Dough Recipe] for best results)
- 2 tbsp grated Pecorino Romano

1. **Blanch the Broccoli Rabe**

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Blanch broccoli rabe **2–3 minutes** until bright green. Drain well and gently squeeze out excess water.

2. **Build the Topping**

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and red pepper flakes; sauté **30–60 seconds** until fragrant.

Add sausage directly to the pan and cook, breaking it up, until browned and cooked through (**5–6 minutes**).

Add broccoli rabe and cannellini beans directly into the same pan. Toss and sauté **2–3 minutes**, lightly mashing a few beans so they cream into the oil and sausage fat. Season lightly with salt. Remove from heat.

3. **Prepare the Dough**

Preheat oven to **500°F (260°C)** with a pizza stone or baking sheet inside. Stretch dough into a **12-inch round** on parchment paper. Brush lightly with olive oil.

4. **Assemble**

Evenly distribute the broccoli rabe, sausage, and bean mixture over the dough. Optional: finish with a **very light sprinkle of Pecorino Romano**. Drizzle with a touch more olive oil.

5. **Bake**

Slide pizza onto the hot stone or pan. Bake **12–15 minutes**, until crust is golden and crisp. Rest 2–3 minutes before slicing.