

What is Stromboli?

While there are many different types of meat turnovers the world over, none are quite like the stromboli, somewhat similar to the submarine sandwich and close relative to the calzone. This hot, baked and delicious offering, copied by commercial variants like Hot Pockets® may have first emerged on the East Coast. Most people credit Nazzareno Romano, the proprietor of Romano's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria, in Philadelphia, with its invention. A few claim that instead, Mike Aquino invented the dish on the West Coast. The first claim is more credible, with most people remembering the advent of the stromboli at Romano's in the early 1950s.



Regardless of origin, today you can find the stromboli in various incarnations in a variety of stores throughout the US. It is essentially a combination of Italian meats and cheese, wrapped in bread or pizza dough and then baked so the interior is piping hot. Instead of being the semi-circle shape typical in calzone, it more resembles a slightly rounded oblong, or a completely closed in burrito. The dough bakes around the meat forming the bread to create what many consider the superlative submarine sandwich.

Stromboli may be served with marinara sauce on the side for dipping, and does tend to differ enough from the calzone to deserve a different appellation. Most calzones, though they may include Italian meats like salami, pepperoni, or prosciutto, have a much higher cheese content. The cheese added to a calzone is usually grated, and when the half-moon is cut, cheese should literally gush from the interior. Some calzones also include marinara sauce in their interior, though this is not always the case.

Instead of using grated cheese, the traditional stromboli uses sliced cheese and tends to include quite a bit more Italian deli meat. It more closely resembles a submarine sandwich than it does a calzone. As tempting as this delicious dish is, be careful when you first take a bite of it. The filling is typically extremely hot, and can easily burn your tongue, rendering your enjoyment of the rest of your meal less agreeable.

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Italian Stromboli Recipe

Be creative with the ingredients! Try a flavored bread like Garden Harvest Bread and switch cooked meats, cheeses and vegetables to fit your tastes.

1 bread dough recipe, mix, or refrigerated dough to make one loaf of bread
1/2 lb thinly sliced deli ham
1/2 cup shredded or 6-8 slices mozzarella cheese
1/3 cup sliced black olives
1 1/2 cups fresh baby spinach
1/3 cup diced red onion
1 1/2 tsp Zesty Pizza & Pasta Spice
1 large egg
Freshly grated parmesan cheese (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Roll out your dough into a rectangle about 1/3 inch thick.
2. Spread the ingredients uniformly on your bread dough to about an inch along each edge.
3. Whisk 1/2 tablespoon of water with your egg to create an egg wash. Brush egg wash along one of the long sides.
4. Start rolling your dough from the long side without the wash. Roll completely and seal the edges where the wash meets the roll.
5. Use the remaining egg was to seal and pinch the ends closed and to brush over the top of the loaf for color.
6. Place in a greased baking sheet and bake for 25-30 minutes or until dark brown and the internal temperature reaches 190 degrees with a thermometer.