

## Homemade Pizza Crust

Why order out when a stellar pizza can easily be made at home? With only a handful of ingredients, homemade pizza crusts can be ready in no time. I'll give tips, tricks, and ideas to get the best homemade pizza crust from your oven!

When making pizza crust ensure the water is at the right temperature. The water needs to be between 105°F–115°F, so a thermometer is best to use.

Once the yeast and sugar are added to the water, leave it for five minutes or until the yeast is frothy before adding the flour.

Flour is the main ingredient in pizza dough, and the type you use can significantly affect the result.

- Tipo 00 flour, a finely ground flour, is the best choice for pizza dough. Its strength and elasticity make a light and airy crust with a crispy exterior.
- Bread flour, high in gluten and protein, can also be used for pizza dough. The high protein content creates chewiness in the dough.
- All-purpose flour also works for homemade pizza dough recipes. The lower gluten content makes the pizza crust slightly denser and crumblier.

Measure the flour correctly! Adding too much flour to any recipe is a common mistake. The best way to measure flour is by using a scale. If you don't have one, fluff the flour with a spoon, sprinkle it into the measuring cup, and use a knife to level it off.

Whatever pizza dough recipe you use, mix all the ingredients. Knead the dough by hand or use a stand mixer. Knead to a soft and supple dough that's not overly sticky.

Fermentation or proofing creates gases in the dough, opening up the crumb. Place a dough ball in a lightly oiled bowl and loosely cover it with plastic wrap. Let rise until doubled in volume.

After the dough rises, most people immediately make pizza with it. However, the best pizza is made from aged dough; place it in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours.

Pizza dough is easiest to stretch at room temperature, so if it has been cold fermented/proofed or aged in the refrigerator, then be sure to give it at least 2–4 hours out of the fridge to get back to room temperature. Never stretch cold dough.

Gently stretch the dough with your hands to protect all the air bubbles developed while resting the dough. Follow the recipe instructions or watch videos to learn how to stretch out pizza by hand. Do not use a rolling pin unless you want a cracker-like, super-thin crust.

Cook the pizza on a preheated stone or steel. If you do not have a stone or steel, use an inverted rimmed baking sheet.

The oven temperature must be high, usually 500°F–550°F or as high as it will go. Preheat the oven with the pizza stone or steel for one hour.

Shaping and baking the pizza on parchment paper will make loading and unloading it from the oven easier.

Brush the pizza crust with olive oil or garlic oil right before it goes in the oven to increase the flavor and crispiness.

When baking the exact timing will depend on the size of the pizza, oven temperature, crust thickness, amount of toppings, and how browned you like the pizza. Cool the pizza on a wire rack for 1–2 minutes before slicing.

Store leftover cooked pizza in the fridge for up to four days.

### **Freezing**

To freeze uncooked dough, divide it into pieces portioned for single pizzas. To use it, thaw it in the fridge overnight before you use it.

Making great pizza crust at home does take a bit more time and effort, but the results are definitely worth it! Follow these tips and you will be impressed by how good your pizza-making will become.

(Sources: [uwyoextension.org](http://uwyoextension.org); High Altitude Baking #B-1366)