

# Pizza Dough

## Ingredients

### Dough

- 3 cups lukewarm water
- 3 tbsp olive oil plus more for drizzling
- 1 tbsp active dry or instant yeast
- 1 tbsp kosher salt plus a pinch for topping
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 kg (8 cups) 00 caputo flour plus more for dusting
- Cornmeal for pizza peel (optional)

### Toppings

- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 1 1/2 lbs fresh mozzarella
- 1 bunch basil

## Instructions

### Mix and store the dough

1. Put the water in a 5-quart bowl or in a lidded (not airtight) plastic food container and add the olive oil, yeast, salt, and sugar. Or use a heavy-duty stand mixer fitted with the dough attachment. Then add all of the flour and mix with a wooden spoon, dough whisk, or the mixer. Cover with a lid (not airtight). Allow the dough to rise at room temperature, approximately 2 hours.

### Shape the dough balls

1. After rising, divide the dough into 8 equal balls. For each ball, pull up and cut off a half-pound (orange-sized) piece of dough, using a serrated knife or kitchen shears. Hold the piece of dough in your hands and add a little more flour as needed so it won't stick to your hands. Gently stretch the surface of the dough around to the bottom on all four sides, rotating the dough a quarter-turn as you go to form a ball. Most of the dusting flour will fall off.
2. Refrigerate the dough balls, each wrapped well in plastic wrap, and use over the next week, or freeze for up to 2 months.

### On Pizza Day

1. Prepare and measure your toppings in advance: This will help you top the pizza quickly so you can get it into the oven before it sticks to the pizza peel.
2. Position a baking stone in the bottom third of the oven and preheat the oven to its highest temperature.
3. Prepare a pizza peel with flour, cornmeal, or parchment paper to prevent sticking when you slide the pizza into the oven. Sprinkle the surface of one of the refrigerated dough balls with flour.
4. Roll out and stretch a pizza crust: Flatten the dough with your hands and a rolling pin on the counter or directly onto the pizza peel to produce a 1/8-inch-thick round, dusting with flour to keep the dough from adhering to your work surface. Use a dough scraper to "un-stick" the dough as needed, and transfer it to the prepared pizza peel if you haven't stretched the dough directly on one. When you're finished, the dough round will be about 12 inches across, and should have enough flour under it to move easily when you shake the peel. As you add the toppings, continue to test for sticking by gently shaking the peel. The pizza should move freely. If it doesn't, use the dough scraper and some flour to un-stick it.
5. Add the toppings: Spread 1/4 cup of tomato sauce over the dough, leaving a 1/2-inch border at the edges, then add 3 ounces of mozzarella and several basil leaves, and sprinkle with a pinch of salt. We prefer using well-spaced chunks of cheese, which gradually melt and spread (giving the crust a longer opportunity to crisp before toppings burn). Drizzle a little olive oil over the pizza.
6. Slide the pizza onto the preheated stone: Place the tip of the peel near the back of the stone, close to where you want the far edge of the pizza to land. Give the peel a few quick forward-and-back jiggles and pull it sharply out from under the pizza. Check for doneness in 8 to 10 minutes and turn the pizza around in the oven if one side is browning too fast. It may take up to 5 more minutes in the oven. Allow to cool slightly, preferably on a wire rack, so that the cheese sets.
7. Repeat with the remaining 7 dough balls and toppings.