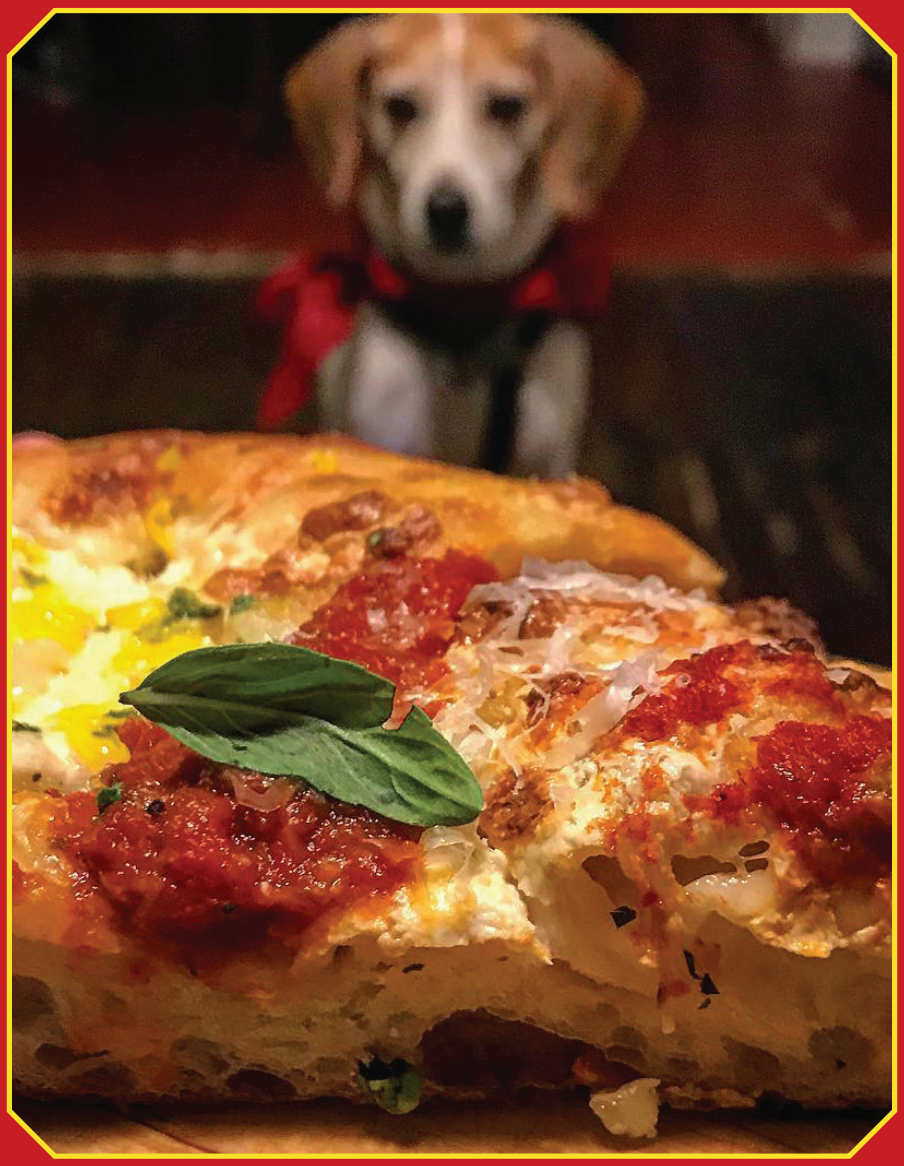
The Pizzeria LaFerrera™



JASON LAFERRERA & MOLLY BAKER

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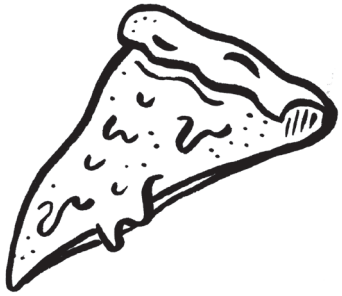
Guide to Making Pizza at Home

PIZZERIA LA FERRERA



This is our pizza recipe. I'm not going to tell you this is the end-all best pizza recipe out there, this is just where our recipe has ended up after 5 years of tinkering and people seem to like it. Of course there are benefits of using alternative methods, but we've found that this recipe makes consistent results in a variety of locations. It's been battle tested and hell, it's even helped us win an award.

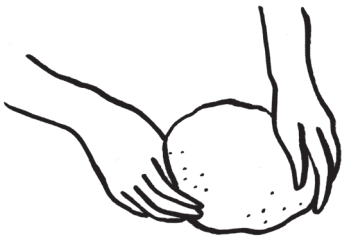
We are fairly egalitarian when it comes to pizza. All pizza is good pizza, and some pizza is great pizza. The goal of these instructions is to be able to make great pizza at home; it's both a rewarding experience and highly addicting... but can be intimidating. The first time we made pizza together was an utter disaster, but repetition helped us problem solve. Please learn from our mistakes.

Equipment

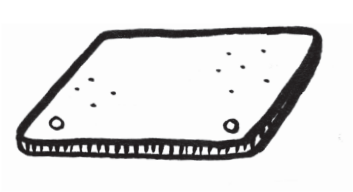
You should already have everything you need at home to make pizza, albeit you may be lacking a kitchen scale. I cannot emphasize enough how useful a scale is in this process for getting consistent results. That being said, empirical measurements are also included for those of you without this instrument. A pizza stone is also a welcomed addition and a baking steel would be even better, but two inverted double stacked baking sheets will do in a pinch. We've been using a stand mixer over the past several years, but hand mixing dough has worked for an eternity before that.

Scale

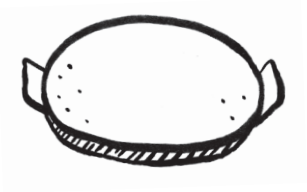
Stand Mixer with Dough Hook



Hands



Pizza Steel



Pizza Stone

Baking Sheets

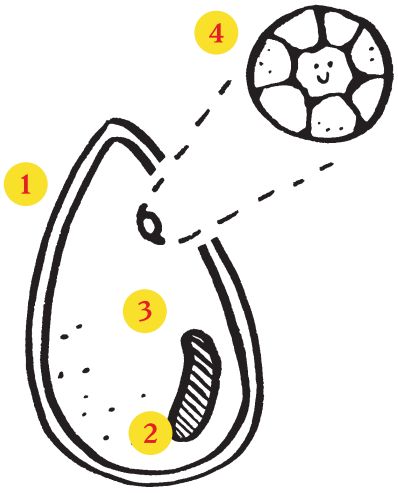
Dough is the foundation of great pizza, so this document will predominantly focus on the steps to achieve high quality dough at home. Of course toppings are important, but they are a place for creativity to thrive or imitation to flatter. We have included a recipe for a somewhat traditional red pizza, something we call **The Classico®.**

So what is dough?

Dough is just flour, water, yeast, and salt combined into a paste that ferments. The water breaks down the starches in the flour that the yeast slowly eat, turning those sugars into carbondioxide, alcohol, and acids. We want our dough to rise slowly to encourage flavor development, and ultimately becomes the base to lay our toppings on.

Flour is the heart of dough, so it's important to understand some critical aspects of it. Wheat has three components: endosperm, bran, and germ—refined flour is just the endosperm, while whole wheat has the germ and bran. There's also red wheat (more protein) and white wheat (softer, better for pan loaves). We prefer bread flour for our pizza dough. The extra protein leads to more gluten development, which helps trap the carbon dioxide the yeast are producing, and leads to a chewier crust. If bread flour is not available, all purpose will do just fine. Double zero flour is great for neopolitan pizza, but your home oven doesn't get hot enough for that. If you continue to make pizza, I highly recommend mixing some flours together for a flavor profile that you enjoy. Recently, we've been doing a mix of **bread flour** (47%), **00 flour** (47%), and freshly milled **red fife** (6%).

All Purpose	Combination of soft and hard wheat 10–12% protein Good for everything
Bread Flour	Made from hard wheat 12–14% protein More gluten
00 Flour	High Protein flour Milled extra fine
Whole Wheat	Made from hard wheat Ground from the entire grain



Anatomy of a Grain

1. Bran

Outer layer that protects the seed

2. Germ

Small, nutrient-rich core (embryo)

3. Endosperm

Middle layer that contains carbs and proteins

4. Gluten

A group of proteins in the endosperm

Water & Salt

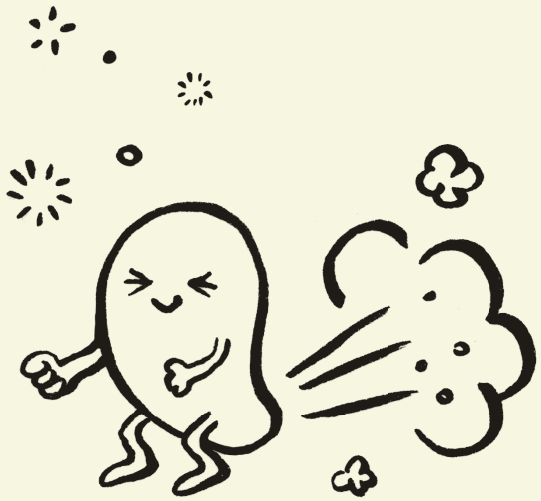
It is a supposed truth that New York water is what makes their pizza taste so good, but any pizza maker will tell you this is completely false. Ideally your water should taste like nothing. Any water without off-flavors will do here, although if your water is particularly chlorinated it will cause some issues. Hydration measures the amount of water to flour, in our case we'll be make a 72% hydration dough. This is on the high side compared to some NY style pizza recipes (often 60–66% hydration), but the higher hydration leads to an airier crust which we find preferable.

Salt's primary purpose is flavor in our dough, but it also adds strength and stability to the gluten that is developing. We use Diamond Crystal Kosher salt, but it's important to know the difference between Diamond and Morton's Kosher salt. All salt is just sodium chloride, but the shape of the salt is what matters when it hits your tongue and dissolves. We don't particularly care about this since it's just going into the dough, but a cup of Morton's is 1.75x the weight of a cup of Diamond salt. This is one of the many reasons a scale is useful.

Yeast

Finally, we need yeast in order for our dough to rise. Sourdough starter is the current trend, adding both flavor and digestibility, but it is difficult to determine the strength of your starter and timing after feedings, so we'll be using instant dry yeast (IDY). Yeast is all around us all of the time. Sourdough starter is a colony raised by regularly feeding wild yeast more starches, but IDY is just certain strains of yeast particularly adept for baking purposes.

Instant Dry Yeast	Highly stable and reliable Can be frozen for years Can be used with refrigerated doughs
Active Dry Yeast	Must be rehydrated before use Fairly perishable Good for recipes with more than one rise
Rapid Rise Yeast	Highly stable and reliable Long lasting Not good for refrigerated doughs



The same principles apply for either though—the yeast convert the sugars and oxygen into carbon dioxide, which makes our dough rise. Once the dough runs out of oxygen, the yeast turns the sugar into alcohols and acids—this adds flavor to the dough. We slow down this process by refrigerating the dough, to increase the amount of flavor the yeast can give us.

So the basic process is this— combine the water and yeast, then add the flour and salt, do some light mixing and add the olive oil. The olive oil is going to add both flavor and elasticity, as well as make the cooked dough crispier. Since this dough is on the higher end of the hydration spectrum, we're going to stretch and fold the dough instead of knead it. The folds accomplish the same goal as kneading—stretching out the gluten strands to help trap the air inside our dough. We want to slow down the yeast, so we cool down our dough in the refrigerator for 2 days so they can start producing the alcohol and acids that make our dough taste better. When it's time to make the pizza, we stop the bulk fermentation and ball up the dough to proof. We stretch out our balls into circles, add our toppings and bake!

The Classico®

The red slice is the slice of nostalgia, this pizza is a tribute to that and should remind you of everything good in the world.

For tomatoes, we recommend whole peeled tomatoes; calcium chloride is usually added to diced tomatoes to keep them firm, but adds an off flavor. If the juice the tomatoes is packed in is watery, drain that off (great for micheladas or bloody marys), and just use the tomatoes themselves. Bianco Dinapoli are great, and can be found in nicer grocery stores these days. A good can of DOP, *Denominazione ∂i Origine Protetta*—fancy words for authentic Italian tomatoes—would be nice, but they're often expensive and hard to find. Milling the tomatoes to remove the seeds will remove some bitterness, but an immersion blender or food processor will also work to turn these into sauce.

We'll be using three cheeses on our pizza: mozzarella, provolone, and parmesan. **Fior di latte** is the cow's milk mozzarella we find here in the US, and I'd spring for a ball of the freshest you can find. A **Picante Provolone** will do you a lot of favors, so something on the sharper end is ideal. **Parmigiano-Reggiano** will be our finisher—**Grana Padano** will work if that's what you have, but please nothing pregrated in a can that is made of saw dust and wood pulp.

Pizzeria LaFerrera Dough

Makes two 14” pizzas. Want more, double the recipe. Want less?
Sorry, you just have to make two pizzas. Make 1–3 days in advance.

360 grams / ml water

500 grams bread flour

½ teaspoon IDY yeast

18 grams salt (3 teaspoons)

3 teaspoons olive oil

1. Measure out 360 grams of water in a mixing bowl. Add ½ teaspoon yeast and mix.

2. Add the flour, and then the salt on top.

3. If mixing by hand, use a fork to slowly start incorporating flour and water together bit by bit. When mostly incorporated, add olive oil and use wet hands to pincher and mix to form a shaggy dough in the bowl, making sure no pockets of flour remain.

   If using a stand mixer, use a dough hook and mix for 2 minutes on low. Add olive oil and mix for 1 more minute.

4. Scrape down the side of the bowl, cover with a towel and set aside.

5. Stretch and fold the dough four times over the next hour (approximately every 15 minutes). Grab a corner of the dough and pull as far up as possible without tearing, and gently place down on the opposite side of the bowl. Repeat for three more corners. Cover the bowl again between the stretch and folds.

6. After the fourth round of stretch and folds, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for 1–3 days.

Pizza Timeline

2 days before
Make dough

2 hours before
Ball up the dough

45 minutes before
Preheat the oven

30 minutes before
Make sauce
Shred cheese

10 minutes before
Make yourself a drink

GO TIME!

Grab a corner

Pull/lift as much as possible without tearing

Gently fold over towards opposite side

Repeat three more times

Shape into a smooth dough boy

Place in fridge to chill for 1 to 3 days


Delicious

The Classico® Recipe

Makes one 14” pizza

1 dough ball (440 g)

½ cup flour

½ cup tomato sauce
(recipe below)

1 teaspoon oregano

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

2.5 oz mozzarella

1 oz provolone

½ tablespoon olive oil

A pinch of salt

4–6 basil leaves

Parmesan to finish
(optional)

Tomato Sauce

28 oz can of tomatoes
(drained if watery)

1 teaspoon salt (6 grams)

½ tablespoon olive oil

Two hours before pizza time, remove the dough from refrigerator and divide into two 440 gram dough balls. Dunk the rough dough ball in flour and then use your hands to create a tight ball. Reflour the ball, and place on a plate and cover with plastic wrap or use a lidded food storage container.

45 minutes before pizza time, preheat your oven as high as it will go (our home oven reaches 550°) with pizza stone or inverted sheet pan on top rack.

Set up your mise en place for your pizzas. Make sauce, shred cheese, get out 14” x 14” piece of parchment paper, put flour in a wide bowl, and drink a beer.

Make your sauce. Using an immersion blender (can also use a regular blender or food mill) process your tomatoes along with salt and olive oil on low speed for a minute or two or until you reach a desired consistency. We like ours on the smoother side.

It's pizza time. Since this is a wet dough, we'll use parchment paper to make things easier, since nothing is worse than trying to get sticky dough into a hot oven.

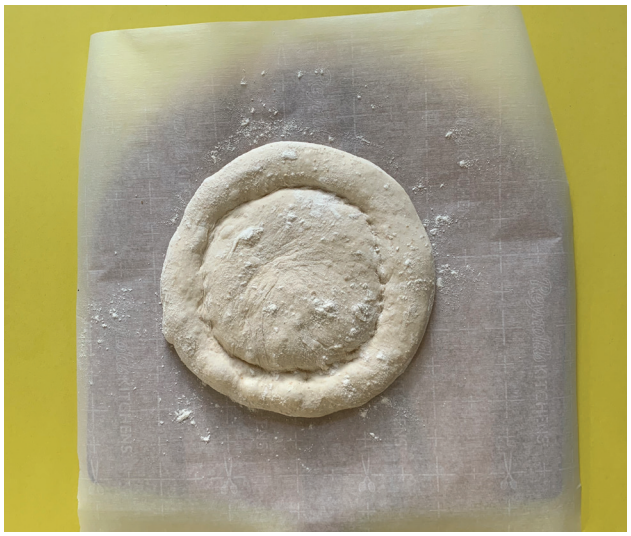
Gently remove your doughball and dunk in flour on both sides. The top should be on top, and the bottom... well you get it. Place doughball on parchment paper and dimple an inner circle about 1" in from the exterior that will be your crust. Gently lift the dough and let gravity pull the dough down as you slowly rotate the dough as it stretches. If the dough begins to stick, place back on parchment and dust with flour. Continue stretching dough until approximately 14" in diameter while maintaining a thicker crust, then place back on parchment paper.

Add a scant ½ cup of sauce to center of the dough and use the back of a spoon to spread in an outwards circle until it reaches 1" from the exterior. Less sauce in the center is a good thing.

Sprinkle crushed red pepper and oregano over the sauce, then shredded provolone, and mozzarella. Drizzle ½ tbsp of olive oil onto pizza and finish with a pinch of salt.

A pizza peel works best, but a large cutting board or upside down sheet pan can also work to transfer your pizza into the oven. Slide the parchment paper and pizza onto your carrier and launch pizza into the oven onto pizza stone or an inverted sheet pan. Cook for approximately 4–6 minutes until the bottom is starting to get some color. Turn on the broiler and continue cooking for 2–3 minutes. Carefully remove pizza from oven.

Finish with torn basil and a generous grating of fresh parmesean. Cut into 8 slices and enjoy!



Dimple that dough

Fully stretched 14” dough

Spread sauce from center towards the crust

Add your spices and provolone

Scatter on some mozzarella

Add basil and parmesean post-oven

Enjoy!

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