

# Pizza, Bread & Savory Pies

## Basic Pizza Dough

Impasto Base per la Pizza

### Ingredients

Serves 4 people

**Note.** Use this recipe to prepare both round pizzas and pizzas in a baking pan.

500 g (1.1 lbs) soft wheat flour type '0' or '00'

350 ml (12.2 fl oz) water

10 g (0.35 oz) fine salt

10 g (0.35 oz) extra virgin olive oil

1.5 g (0.05 oz) dry brewer's yeast or active dry yeast

**Flour.** The flour must be 'strong' meaning that it must have a protein content of at least 12% (see nutritional information on the packaging). The strength of the flour is given by its ability to absorb liquids when preparing the dough and to retain carbon dioxide when proofing.

**Yeast.** Fresh compressed yeast (which contains about 70% water) and dry brewer's yeast are available on the market. It is best to use dry yeast since the fresh one is very delicate and sensitive to changes in temperature.

### Tools

Digital scale

Large bowl

Fork or spoon

Stand mixer (optional)

Dough cutter

Pastry board (optional)

Kitchen towel, plastic wrap, or plate



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### Procedure

**Note.** The making of the pizza dough can be divided into 4 main steps:

1. Forming the dough and first proofing.
2. Slamming the dough and second proofing.
3. Folding the dough and letting it rest for 20-24 hours.
4. Dividing the dough and letting it rest before baking.

**ONE.** In a large bowl, mix the **flour** with the **yeast**. Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the **water** and mix with a fork or spoon. Once the dough begins to form, use your hands to mix.

**Tip.** If you prefer, you can use an electric mixer with the hook attachment, setting it to a low speed.

When the water is absorbed, add more and mix. Continue doing this until you finish the all amount of water in the recipe. Then start folding the dough in half on itself for about 10 minutes. If you feel lumps in the dough, gently break them up with your fingers.

**Note.** when you start working flour with water, a fundamental process is triggered which forms a net-like structure (called gluten network). This elastic structure serves to enclose the gases produced during the natural leavening of the dough.

When you see that the dough comes off easily from the bowl, add the **salt** and keep kneading.

**Note.** Salt must always be added once the yeast has completely dissolved in the dough. The reason is that salt interferes with the rising process of yeast by reducing its strength so salt must be added to the dough long after the yeast.



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Finally, pour in the **olive oil** and continue to knead until completely absorbed. Let the dough rest in the bowl at room temperature for about 20 minutes covered with a kitchen towel, plastic wrap, or plate.

**Note.** At this stage, the dough is a little rough. Don't worry if there are lumps because the dough will stabilize during proofing.

**TWO.** Fold the dough in half on itself in the bowl for a few minutes. When it comes off easily from the bowl, place the dough on a work surface or pastry board. Now gently slam the dough on the surface then fold it in half on itself. Repeat for a few minutes.

**Note.** The slamming helps to form gluten strands. The folding instead eliminates the carbon dioxide produced by the previous proofing thus leaving room for the new air that will form in the slow proofing. Additionally, the folds pull and strengthen the gluten strands.

Put the dough back into the bowl and let it rest at room temperature for about 15 minutes covered with a cloth, film, or plate.

**THREE.** Place the dough on the work surface and fold it again by gently beating the dough on the counter and then folding it in half on itself. Repeat this step several times and you will feel that the dough takes on more and more strength.

On a work surface (preferably in marble), drag the dough towards you with your hands making it turn on itself. In Italian, this technique is called *piratura* (which means dough rounding) and it is done to give the dough strength and give it a ball shape.

Place the dough in a large container dusted with flour. Grease the surface of the dough with a little extra virgin olive oil, cover the container with a cloth, film, or plate and put the dough to rest in the refrigerator (preferably on the lower shelves) for 20-24 hours.



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**FOUR.** Remove the dough from the refrigerator and use a dough cutter to divide it into smaller portions depending on the type of pizza you want to make, round or in a baking pan.

**The amount of dough.** Here you need a scale! If you want to prepare round pizzas, divide the dough into portions of 250 g (8.8 oz) each. If you want to prepare the pizza in a medium-sized pan (about 30 x 40 cm / 11.8 x 15.7 in), divide the dough into portions of about 600 g (21.2 oz). In Italy, we use a specific formula to calculate the amount of dough needed for a baking pan (square or rectangular). The formula can only be used with centimeters and grams.

$$\text{Base} \times \text{height} / 2$$

First multiply the base by the height of the pan (ex. 30 cm x 40 cm = 1200).

Then divide the result by 2 (1200 / 2 = 600 g).

So for a 30 cm x 40 cm baking pan you need 600 g of dough.

For each weighed portion of dough, repeat the folds and rolling of step THREE. Sprinkle a bowl or tall container with flour and place the balls of dough to rest at room temperature for about 2 hours or until doubled in volume, covering it with a towel, foil, or plate.

The dough is now ready to be rolled out.



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