



Home Made Pizza

Pizza dates back thousands of years, although originally it was a type of Focaccia flatbread made by the Romans, to which various toppings were added.

Modern pizza evolved from similar flatbread dishes in Naples, Italy, in the 18th or early 19th century. It was mainly eaten in Italy and by emigrants from there. This changed after World War II when Allied troops stationed in Italy came to enjoy pizza along with other Italian foods.

It is really quite easy to make and is good fun when you involve the kids. It introduces them to baking, bread making and the use of yeast. You don't need a pizza oven, a pizza stone, or a food mixer with a dough hook, just follow our easy recipe and watch the attached videos to give you every chance of success.

For the Dough:

- 3 ½ cups (440g) of Plain Flour or you can also use Strong Bread Flour
- 2 tsp Salt
- 1 tsp Sugar
- 2 Tbsp of Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 1/3 cups (320ml) of Warm Water (about 40 degrees)
- 1 packet of instant Yeast, or 7g from a tub

Add the yeast to warm water and set it aside for about 3 minutes.

If you have a standing mixer, fitted with a dough attachment, mix together the flour, salt, sugar and olive oil in the bowl. Stir the yeast in the water to make sure its all dissolved and add it to the flour mixture.

With the speed on medium, mix until everything is combined. Reduce the speed to low and mix for 10 minutes.

If you don't have a mixer simply use a large mixing bowl. Add in all the ingredients and bring it

together with a wooden spoon. Then turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. With lightly floured hands, knead the dough for 4 - 5 minutes. You can see how Gennaro Contaldo [does this here](#). After kneading, the dough should still feel a little soft. Poke it with your finger – if it slowly bounces back, your dough is ready to rise. If not, keep kneading.

Oil 2 bowls with olive oil and set aside. Divide the dough in two pieces and roll into a ball. Place each ball of dough into the oiled bowls, seam side down and brush the tops of the dough with a little oil to stop them from drying out. Place a piece of cling film on top of each bowl and place the dough into a warm place. Inside a microwave or an oven (oven turned off) works best. Leave until it doubles in size, which might take up to 2 hours, so now make the sauce.

For the Tomato Sauce

- 1 ¼ cups of Passata or discard some of the juice out of a tin of chopped tomatoes and puree or mash the rest.
- 1tsp Dried Oregano, or to taste
- 1tsp Dried Basil, or to taste
- 1tsp Garlic Powder, or to taste
- 1tsp Onion Powder, or to taste
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- Pinch of Sugar

To make the sauce simply mix together all of the sauce ingredients and adjust the seasoning to your taste. Set aside.

To Make the Pizza

Preheat the oven to 240 degrees. If you do have a pizza stone, preheat it for about 20 minutes. If not, just take a baking tray and put in the oven upside down, that way there's no edges to get in the way.

Sprinkle some flour onto your worktop, take 1 ball of dough and dip it in flour on all sides. Using your hands ([watch the video!](#)) or a rolling pin, roll the dough out to a 10 inch circle. Keep it fairly thin in the middle and thicker round the edge, that means it will cook all the way through and have a nice crust round the outside.

If you have a 'pizza peel' (looks like a paddle and used for sliding pizza into oven) place the rolled out pizza on it. If you don't, simply use another upside down baking tray very lightly dusted with flour.

Now using a ladle, add some of the prepared tomato sauce, using the back of the ladle swirl it all over the top of the dough. Top it with about 200g of shredded fresh Mozzarella cheese. Using the pizza peel, or the upturned baking tray as a peel, slide the pizza onto the pizza stone, or other heated baking tray and cook for about 20 minutes, rotating half way through to insure even cooking. Keep an eye on it so it doesn't burn.

Bring it out, top with some freshly chopped basil and you have a classic Margherita pizza.

There are probably as many pizza toppings as their are pizza shops in Naples. Here are a few reminders of the most popular:

Pepperoni

Lots of pepperoni, and lots of cheese! My favourite.

Ingredients: Tomato sauce, mozzarella and pepperoni.

Supreme

Must have at least two meats, otherwise it's just another pizza.

Ingredients: Tomato Sauce, mozzarella, bacon, onion, beef mince, green pepper, pepperoni, mushroom and olives.

Hawaiian

Lots of people think this is pretty much out of date now, but it's still a great pizza.

Ingredients: Tomato sauce, mozzarella, ham and pineapple.

Garlic Butter Prawns and Chilli

The Australian favourite, a pizza topped with garlic prawns and finished with a drizzle of garlic butter. Heaven in the form of a pizza!

Ingredients: Pizza sauce, mozzarella, garlic butter prawns, capsicum, onion, chilli, rocket

For more ideas, see [here](#) and [here](#).

If you have a Pizza stone you can also make one on the BBQ, which is pretty impressive!