

This is the pizza dough I have used for a number of years. I like the idea that, for the most part, the rising takes place in the fridge the day before. Once, I made dough that required punching down a couple of times during the day. Because we were not going to be home, we took the dough with us in the car and punched it down when required!

Tips: My sister suggested that instead of using flour to press out the dough, oil your little fingertips with EVO and press out. She says it works really well. She also said NOT to use “pizza” yeast. I think this is probably instant yeast. She bought some and the package said you can make a pizza in 3 hours?? She said the crust was “awful”. However, by using regular yeast and letting the dough have a nice slow rise you develop the taste & get a really good crust.

Pizza dough freezes well: after the 1st rise, punch down the dough, place in a freezer bag & freeze. **To use:** remove the dough from the freezer, place in an oiled bowl; cover with plastic wrap & a towel and set stand until it is room temperature, about 3 hours, or the night before, remove dough from freezer, place into an oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap & leave in the fridge until a couple of hours before you want to make your pizza. Remove dough from fridge, cover with a towel & allow to rest until it is room temperature. Make pizza as usual.

A pizza stone is an inexpensive but welcome addition to your kitchen equipment if you like to make pizzas.

1 (1/4 oz) package active dry yeast (2 1/4 tsp.)
1 3/4 to 2 cups of unbleached flour, plus additional for kneading and dredging
3/4 cup warm water
1 tsp. salt (the original recipe calls for more, but I think this is enough)
1 Tbsp. EVO

Stir together yeast, 1 Tbsp. flour and 1/4 c. warm water in a measuring cup & let stand until mixture appears creamy on the surface. Around 5 to 8 minutes depending on temp. in kitchen. I know you will think this is nuts, but I use chopsticks to combine the yeast, flour & water. I read somewhere that metal & yeast don't like each other.

Stir together 1 1/4 c. flour & salt in mixer bowl or food processor, then add yeast mixture, oil & remaining 1/2 c warm water & stir until smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour, 1/4 c to 1/2 c, for dough to come away from side of bowl. This dough will be slightly wetter/sticky and that's a good thing. Knead dough in mixer for 5 min. or processor for a couple of minutes. Dough should be smooth, soft and elastic (so add a bit more flour if you need to) but remember it should be a bit sticky. Place dough in an oiled bowl; dust with a Tbsp. of flour, cover with plastic wrap and place in fridge. The next day remove the dough about 3 hours before you want to make the pizza. Punch down, cover and let rise again at room temperature until you are ready to assemble your pizza.

Place the pizza stone in a cold oven & preheat it at 500 degrees for 1 hour before baking the pizza.

Cut out a 12" round of baking parchment. Place dough onto the parchment lined 12" pizza pan and using floured fingers, press out the dough to fill the pan. Crimp edges a bit. Place a minimal amount of toppings on the dough then slide the pizza, baking parchment & all onto the pizza stone; bake for 8 - 10 minutes. It kind of depends on how many toppings you use but less is best. The more you put on the longer it takes. But don't over bake as it will continue to bake after you remove from the oven. Remove the pizza from the oven onto a pizza pan to cool approximately 5 before cutting.

Recently, I tested a new pizza dough recipe. It's Jim Lahey's No Knead 18 hour rise dough. The dough has a great flavour & his method for baking works great! The beauty of this dough is that it does not require a heavy duty stand mixer with a dough hook. However, you have to plan a bit so that you can be around after the 18 hours are up, plus it may take longer, depending on how warm your room is.

Whereas, with the recipe above, it's no fuss, no muss, you mix the dough, using a heavy duty stand mixer with a dough hook, (if you are so inclined, you can knead by hand), throw it into a bowl & let it rise in the fridge until the next day. You only have to make sure you take it out of the fridge a few hours before you want to put together your pizza.