

THE BEST NEW YORK STYLE PIZZA DOUGH AND 14 TIPS FOR SUCCESS!!

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So, you want to know how to make pizza dough? This is my favorite recipe for pizza dough.

I've been making a lot of NY style pizza dough The obsession started a while back, and I've finally found a recipe that I love the best! After years of experiments (and I mean years!), I am now using this recipe based on recommendations from the many fine pizza makers at www.pizzamaking.com and the [Dough Doctor, Tom Lehmann](#).

Making NY style pizza dough is definitely somewhat of an art form. There are so many variables that can be changed aside from the ingredients alone. For example, there is oven temperature, temperature of the water used to make the dough, proofing methods (room temp vs cold rise), order of adding the ingredients (yes, this makes a big difference!), mixing time, use of autolyse, use of poolish (I don't do either of the last 2, although I have in the past) and then of course, the toppings which can be simple or as complex as you'd like. But don't worry too much about all of this – my method is easy and straightforward. Plus, you will make better dough than 99% of the pizza chains out there.

My all-time favorite dough is NY style dough. This dough contains water, flour, salt, instant yeast, and olive oil. After it is mixed, it is proofed in the refrigerator for a minimum of 24 hours and up to 72 hours (it can also be frozen).

This recipe produces a crisp yet foldable crust that is tender, light, and flavorful and will make enough for four 14-inch pizzas.

Fourteen tips for success:

1. Use high-quality flour – I like to use King Arthur's all purpose or bread flour; higher protein (ie, bread) flours work best. However, I prefer all-purpose flour because I like a lighter, airy crust.
2. Do not add instant dry yeast (IDY) directly to cold or cool water – you may shock the yeast (add the IDY to your flour instead) (please note that IDY differs from active dry yeast, which must be activated by adding it to water).

3. Use only enough yeast to “get the job done” – yeast eats the sugar in your flour to produce its leavening effects – I’ve found that if you use too much, your dough will be tasteless (this is just my opinion); however, it is a fact, that too much yeast can make your dough taste bad. Most recipes out there, some of them in well known, published books contain too much yeast!

4. Always use your refrigerator. The best NY style doughs “ferment” or “cure” in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours and up to 48-72 hours. This is called a “cold rise” (vs warm rise on your kitchen counter) and it is used to retard the dough’s fermentation, allowing that distinctive flavor to come through (ever wonder why some pizza crust tastes different than others, despite the fact that they are both made from just about the same exact ingredients? – this is a big reason why!) When your dough rises too quickly, the flavor will not develop optimally. Slow rise = MUCH better flavor.

5. Use a scale to weigh the flour instead of using a measuring cup – it is much more accurate and will yield superior results. I’ll admit, I resisted doing this for a loooong time. Just do it. You’ll be glad you did and your dough will be more consistent and much improved.

6. Mix the oil in as the last step, after the flour has all been incorporated. This is important to allow the flour to hydrate properly.

7. Before tossing or opening your dough balls, flour them *very* well on each side (if you are a beginner) to ensure they do not stick to your counter or pizza peel. I sometimes use a bit more flour after I begin spreading them.

8. Take care not to “degas” the rim of your pizza as you are spreading your dough! Do NOT ever use a rolling pin! There are many different methods to spread/open your dough ball. I hope to add a few pictures someday of this process.

9. Ensure that your oven is preheated for a sufficient amount of time (about 1 hour) and bake the pizza within 6 to 8 inches of your broiler so that the tops browns sufficiently in conjunction with the bottom of the pizza. Do not place the stone near the bottom of your oven. I made this mistake for too many years. After your stone has been preheated sufficiently, the heat from the stone will cook the pizza from the bottom and you can switch the broiler on if you find you need more browning on the top (I now use the broiler to bake my pizzas...more on this sometime in the future). If you find that your cheese is browning well before your rim attains sufficient color, use partially frozen cheese (ie, place shredded cheese in the freezer while the oven is heating up) and cold sauce.

10. Use a pizza stone if you have one. The stone will draw moisture out of the dough and produce a beautifully crisp crust. I use a pizza steel because my stones kept breaking.

11. Do not use too much pizza sauce – it will make your pizza soggy

12. Do not use low fat cheese to top your pizza or preshredded cheese (the former will not melt sufficiently and the latter contains additives that prevent the cheese from sticking together and therefore does not melt very well). The best is low-moisture, whole milk mozzarella. If you must use preshredded cheese, I've found that adding the sauce on top of the cheese helps with the melting. Also, do not use too much cheese; apply it sparingly so that you can achieve that mottled NY pizza appearance.

13. Use semolina or flour on the bottom of your pizza peel to prevent the pizza dough from sticking but be careful not to overdo it because it will burn.

14. Give the pizza peel a few very small quick jerks to make sure the pizza will easily slide off your pizza peel before attempting to transfer pizza to the oven, and more importantly, rub flour into the peel before placing the dough on top.