



babadogh

How do I make  
**good pizza dough?**



# How do I make good pizza dough?

Pizza dough perfection can seem like a maze with all the pizza styles, dough hydration levels, room temperature versus cold proofing, crust leoparding, and yeast mysteries. Phew, it can be overwhelming!

But fear not! We're here to drop some dough-making wisdom on you, and we hope it makes your pizza dough adventures a blast! It's all about having fun, practicing, and staying chill. Trust us, if you roll with our tips, you'll end up with a pizza that's seriously awesome!

# So, where do I begin, you ask?

Well, a solid kick-off is to get cosy with the ins and outs of pizza dough ingredients and how they buddy up in the dough dance. This little knowledge nugget can be your secret weapon against pizza mishaps and dough casualties in the bin.



# Flour

The best flour for pizza dough will depend on personal preference and the type of pizza you're trying to make, but as a beginner, you should know that three types of flour are commonly used for pizza dough:

## All purpose flour

All-purpose flour or plain flour is a lower-protein flour (9% to 12%). While it may not create the same strong, elastic dough as bread flour, it can still produce a tasty crust with a softer texture.

## Strong Bread Flour

Strong Bread flour is a higher-protein (12% to 14%). It has a high gluten content giving pizza dough strength and elasticity. This flour is often used for pizza dough because it can create a crispy crust with a chewy texture.

## Tipo "00" Flour

Tipo "00" is a popular Italian flour with a lower protein content than bread flour (11% to 12%). It's finely ground, which makes a smooth, tender dough, and is often used for Neapolitan-style pizzas. We really love to use this flour.



# Test your flour

**1**

## **Looking for signs of spoilage**

Check for signs such as a foul smell, discolouration, or the presence of mould or pests. If you see any of these signs, the flour should not be used.

**2**

## **Checking the expiry date**

If the flour is past its expiry date, it's probably not fresh and should not be used.

**3**

## **Performing a freshness test**

To do this, sprinkle a small amount of flour into a bowl. Add a small amount of water to the flour and mix it to form a paste. If the paste has a mild, slightly sweet smell, the flour is still fresh. If the paste has a rancid or sour smell, the flour may be old and should not be used.

**4**

## **Checking for bugs or pests**

Check the flour for small black or brown specks. If you see any signs of bugs or pests, the flour should not be used.

# Lets talk about yeast!

You can use instant or fresh yeast to make pizza dough. each has its advantages and disadvantages.

- Instant yeast is easy to use and requires no activation before being added to the dough.
- It has a longer shelf life than fresh yeast and can be stored at room temperature for several months.
- it's reliable, producing consistent results in pizza dough so if you don't want a disaster the first time round then go with the instant stuff.
- Make sure to store any remaining packets in a cool dark place like a pantry or cabinet so they don't go bad too soon.
  
- Fresh yeast is harder to find and requires activation before being added to the dough. We've never tried that hard if we're honest!
- Some people prefer the flavour and texture that fresh yeast gives to their pizza and it can be more forgiving if you're working with dough that's hard to rise or if you're in a cooler environment.

Don't stress about whether it's dry or fresh yeast though. The main thing is it's active.

To test if your yeast is alive, try this:

**1**

Mix a teaspoon of sugar with 60ml warm water in a small bowl or glass.

**2**

Drop a teaspoon of yeast into the sugar-water party and give it a gentle stir.

**3**

Let it chill for 5-10 minutes in a cosy, draft-free spot.

After that, your yeast mix should be foamy and bubbly, like it's having a good time. If it's doing the foamy dance, your yeast is alive and ready to rock in your recipe. But if it's just sitting there like a lump, well, it might be time to say goodbye to that yeast.

Another point to note is that using too much yeast can cause the dough to rise too quickly, leading to over-proving so make sure you follow the recipe!



# Salt and water

And finally, the easy bit which is good old salt, and lukewarm water.

Why lukewarm water we hear you ask. Water that is too hot will kill the yeast, while water that is too cold will make it harder for the yeast to activate and create bubbles.

The ideal temperature of your water should be between 38°C to 46°C (100°F to 115°F). Use a thermometer, don't guess!

# Dough hydration

Let's talk dough hydration – no need to get all fancy here. This is just the amount of water compared to the flour in your dough recipe.

It's usually given as a percentage, which shows how much water you have in relation to the flour weight. So, if you're using 500g flour and 350g water, you have 70% hydration level ( $350 \div 500 \times 100$ ).

Now, when that hydration level is higher, your dough is going to be all wet and stretchy, with a soft and airy crumb. But if it's on the lower side, your dough will be drier, denser, and with a tighter crumb. It's all about the dough-to-water balance.





# Equipment

We're not suggesting you run out and buy all the latest pizza gadgets, but some basics can really help you at the beginning of your journey.

- Dough scraper
- Dough cutter
- Large bowl
- Measuring scales
- Measuring jug
- Tea towel
- A pizza stone for your oven





# Basic dough recipe

## Ingredients

560g lukewarm water  
900g '00' pizza flour  
9g fresh yeast or 4g instant dry yeast  
30g salt

1. Add the yeast to the lukewarm water and stir. Leave for 5 minutes.
2. Add the flour to the bowl of your stand mixer with a dough attachment.
3. Turn on the mixer to the lowest speed setting, and slowly pour in the water/yeast mixture. Make sure all the yeast is used.
4. Continue mixing for around 5-7 minutes until the dough starts to look smooth. This is called kneading.



# Bulk proving – let the dough rise

Bulk proving in pizza dough making is like letting your dough chill out and do its thing as one big doughy gang before it gets divided into individual pizza bases.

Here's the scoop:

1. During bulk proving, your dough hangs out in a container or bowl, all covered up. It gets cosy at a specific temperature for a while, which can be a few hours or even overnight.
2. This is where the magic happens! The yeast in the dough gets to work, munching on sugars and burping out carbon dioxide gas. That gas makes the dough puff up and rise. Meanwhile, some enzymes are also working their mojo, developing that delicious dough flavour.
3. Your dough gets stronger and tastier during this phase, making it easier to work with later.

# Here's how to bulk prove

After kneading, place the dough in a large, lightly oiled bowl. Cover the bowl with a damp towel to keep the dough from drying out and put the bowl in a warm, draft-free spot in your kitchen.

It's important to note that the amount of yeast you use, and the temperature of your kitchen can affect how quickly your dough rises. If you're working in a cooler kitchen or using a slower-acting yeast, it may take longer for your dough to double in size. Similarly, if your kitchen is very warm or you're using a fast-acting yeast, your dough may rise more quickly.



Pizza dough likes it cosy, ideally between 24-29°C (75-85°F). If it's too chilly, the yeast won't party enough to give you that nice rise. But if it's too hot, the yeast might just throw in the towel.

But hey, we're not all pizza dough temp whisperers, right? No worries! This is where using a handy gadget like an electronic temperature probe that tells you exactly what's going on inside your dough. You simply stick a tiny metal probe into the dough's heart, and the display shows you the temperature. So, you'll know if your dough's living its best life and proofing like a pro.

Visit our website and download the [pizza dough bible](#) - it covers flour, water, salt and yeast weights plus the times and temperatures for bulk and ball proofs.

# Punching down

Once your bulk-proved dough has done its rising thing, it's time to punch it down to let out any pesky air pockets. This way, your pizza crust won't turn into a balloon in the oven. "Punching down the dough" might sound intense, but it's just a fancy way of saying you're going to deflate it.

## 1

Use your fist and gently, but firmly, press into the centre of the dough. You're basically pushing out any big air bubbles. Then, fold the edges of the dough toward the centre, shaping it into a nice little ball.

## 2

You can repeat this a couple of times to make sure all those air pockets are history, and your dough is evenly chill.

## 3

Now, when it's time to divide the dough into portions, remember to be quick and gentle. Don't overwork it! For precision, grab a scale to weigh the portions because eyeballing it can lead to wonky results. You've got this!





# Portioning the dough

To measure out dough balls accurately, you will need a kitchen scale, a dough scraper or knife, and a clean work surface.

**1**

Turn out the bulk proved dough onto a lightly floured work surface.

**2**

Weigh the entire batch of dough on a kitchen scale and record the total weight.

**3**

Work out how many dough balls you want to make and divide the total weight of the dough by that number. For example, if you have a 1.5 kg batch of dough and want to make 6 dough balls, divide 1500 by 6 to get 250g sized balls.

**4**


Using your dough cutter, cut off a piece of dough from the batch that is equal to the weight you calculated in step 2.



# Prepare for dough balling

- Sprinkle some flour on your work surface. This stops the dough from getting too clingy and makes it easier to handle.
- Pop a portion of dough onto the floured surface. Gently press it down with your fingertips into a small, flattened circle.
- Now, imagine your dough is like a clock. Grab the edge at 12 o'clock and fold it towards the middle, about halfway. Then, do the same thing with the 6 o'clock edge, folding it up and over the first fold. Basically, you're folding your dough in half.
- Repeat the folding dance, but this time with the edges at 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock. Fold them towards the middle, overlapping the folds you did before. Keep doing this until you've folded all four sides to create a neat little dough package.



- 
- Gently press on the centre of your dough package to seal the folds and make it all nice and round.
  - Put your hands on each side of the dough ball and give it a gentle roll on the floured surface in a circular motion. This helps even things out to perfect your dough ball.
  - Finally, roll the edges towards the middle and pinch them together. Keep doing this until you've got yourself a smooth, even ball of dough.



# Prepare your Babadohs for proving

- Mix a 50:50 blend of flour and semolina roll each dough ball in the mix.
- Now, toss each dough ball into a Babadoh. Keep going until all your dough buddies are chilling inside their Babadoh beds.
- Slap on the lids, and let the dough take it easy in there. It needs to kick back and relax before you shape and bake it. This chill time helps the dough get all stretchy and elastic. How long? Well, that depends on your recipe, but usually, you're looking at 2-3 hours at room temperature.





Don't make the mistake of under-proving. This is when you rush the dough and don't give it enough time to rise, it's like missing out on the good stuff.

Follow your recipe's rise times, and if your kitchen is feeling extra hot or humid, tweak things a bit.

Similarly don't risk over-proving by letting the dough party for too long, it might get a bit too wild and collapse on you.

Keep an eye on your dough and use it when it's reached the perfect rise. If you accidentally let it go overboard, don't worry, we've all done it! Just give it a gentle punch-down, reshape it, and let it rise again for a shorter spell. A bit like a dough makeover!

# Prepare for pizza

When your dough balls have finished their cosy nap, take them out one by one.

- Sprinkle some flour on your worktop or in a bowl. Then, flip those Babadohs upside-down.
- If you've floured your dough ball properly, it should pop out without a fuss.
- Give them a little shake to shake off any extra flour, and then it's time to get your pizza into shape!

Oh, and here's a handy tip: If you're not planning to use the dough right away, stash those dough balls in your trusty Babadoh in the fridge until you're ready. Or, for the long haul, toss them in the freezer more pizza adventures another day!





# Stretch or roll your dough

Stretching and rolling pizza dough are both legit ways to shape your pizza base, and they each come with their perks and quirks. If you're all about that authentic pizza experience though, give stretching a go. It can make your crust taste amazing!

Start by giving the dough ball a gentle press down in the middle using your fingertips. Make it into a small, kind of flat circle or oval shape. But hey, don't go all Hulk on it! You want to keep those air bubbles inside for a light and airy crust.







Now, let's get that dough stretching party started! Push the dough outward from the centre toward the edges using your fingertips. Spin the dough around as you go, working your way around the circle. Leave the edges a tad thicker for that crusty goodness.



If you want to make things easier, you can lift the dough and let gravity lend a hand. Grab the dough's edge with your knuckles and gently spin and stretch it, letting it hang down. Keep spinning and stretching until it hits your desired size and thickness.



Every now and then, check if the dough is an even thickness all over. Hold it up to the light and spot any thicker or thinner spots. Fix them as needed.

Once your dough is the size and thickness you're aiming for, gently move it to a pizza peel (if you're using a pizza stone) or onto a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.





# Roll with it

Here's the deal, if you're just starting your pizza journey and hand-shaping feels like a foreign language, don't sweat! Rolling the dough is a pizza shortcut. It gives you a smooth, even crust, and it's a speedy move, especially when you've got a pizza-making marathon going on.

## If you decide to roll your pizza dough, here are a few tricks to get you the best results:

**1**

**Be gentle.** Pressing too hard can make your crust turn into a tough cookie. Let the rolling pin do the heavy lifting.

**2**

**Flour power.** Dust your work surface and rolling pin generously with flour to keep that dough from sticking like a clingy friend. You can even sprinkle a bit of flour on top of the dough for good measure.

**3**

**Centre stage.** Start rolling from the middle of the dough and work your way out, spinning the dough around as you go. This way, you'll get a nice, even spread.

**4**

**Thin is in.** Try to roll the dough to a uniform thickness. Keep the edges slightly thinner than the middle, so your crust bakes up perfectly in the oven.

In the end, it comes down to what you like and the kind of pizza crust you're aiming for. If you're just starting in the pizza-making game, go ahead and give both methods a whirl. Most importantly, go with the flow and see which one works for you.

# Save your dough



And remember pizza dough can be made ahead of time and frozen for later using Babadoh. Check our [blog](#) on how best to defrost.



# Follow us for more



[www.babadoh.com](http://www.babadoh.com)