

Sample Size Pizza Crust

To get the biggest compliments from your guests, make this dough 24-36 hours before your serving time!

Ingredients

Yields two 12-inch pizza crusts

- 3 cups of Mondako flour
- 1 ¼ teaspoons of salt
- 2 teaspoons of instant or active dry yeast (*see Yeast note)
- 1 cup of water (**see Water Temperature note)
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil (extra virgin not required)

Notes

*Yeast:

Instant dry and active dry yeasts are not the same, though they are used in similar amounts.

Instant yeast can be mixed in with the other dry ingredients. DO NOT rehydrate.

Active dry yeast requires rehydration. Mix the active dry yeast with a pinch of sugar and about 2 Tbs. of warm, not hot, water. Whisk together and let stand. After standing 15-20 minutes, it should look like the foam on top of a freshly poured beer.

** Water Temperature:

Final dough temperature is critical, so starting with the right temperature water is important. In most cases, the water should feel slightly cool to the touch (70-75° F, if you have a thermometer). If using active dry yeast, use the 2 Tbs.

of warmer water to activate the yeast, and the remaining water should be in the slightly cool range.

The Hurry-Up Process

If you forgot to make the dough balls yesterday, relax. You can still impress your dinner guests with great tasting pizza!

Instead of following the "Rest and Relax" step after "Mixing," let the whole piece of dough proof in a lightly greased bowl, covered for 60-90 minutes. It should easily almost double in size. At this point, divide your dough piece in two and continue following the directions above, starting with "Make Up."

Mixing

Combine all the ingredients except for the olive oil. Mix in a stand mixer or by hand for 1-2 minutes until you have a "shaggy" ball. Then add the olive oil and continue mixing. If the dough still appears a bit dry, you may need to add another tablespoon or two of water. Let the added water mix in before proceeding. Once the olive oil is incorporated, turn the mixer to medium speed and mix until you have a soft dough and the dough clears the side of the mixing bowl, probably 5-6 minutes. If mixing by hand, the dough should feel soft and smooth with no lumps.

Rest and Relax

Let the dough relax, covered in a slightly greased bowl in a warm spot for 30-40 minutes. Then divide the dough in half, round both dough pieces, and place in an airtight container in the refrigerator overnight. The dough should remain in the refrigerator at least 4-6 hours, ideally overnight or up to 36 hours. (Too much going on in your life? See "The Hurry-Up Process" below). Take the dough balls out of the fridge about 2 hours before you wish to make up the pizzas.

Make up

This recipe should make two, 12-inch pizzas with crusts similar in thickness to what the delivery guy brings you. Take the dough balls that have been sitting out and start to stretch/shape them into rounds. Take your time.

Stretch and pull a bit and then wait 5 minutes and continue the process. If you're overly aggressive, you'll just tear the dough and your sauce will dribble through. Once you get it to the right size, (should be larger than a dinner plate), put it in a lightly greased or olive oiled pan. Cover it and take a 10-minute break. Return and push the dough into the edges to completely fill your pan. If it keeps snapping back, take another breather and allow your dough to relax some more.

Proofing

Once you get the dough to fully cooperate, cover, and allow it to proof at room temperature for 60-90 minutes. The secret to great, chewy crusts is to never leave the dough uncovered. It dries out quickly. Somewhere around now, think about preheating your oven to 450° F.

Baking

Put on your favorite toppings, usually starting with the sauce.

At 450° F, it will probably take about 10-12 minutes to begin baking on the lower rack of your oven, then move it to the upper rack to get some color. After moving the pies, you'll probably need to bake another 12-15 minutes. Try to take out before your smoke detector goes off, but not before you have some beautiful crust color and lots of bubbly cheese.

Enjoy!