THE FULL RECIPE · NEAPOLITAN

Neapolitan pizza dough: my complete recipe



Hendrik Kleinwächter · The Bread Code



WATER	SALT	FRESH YEAST	PER BALL	MIX TO PIZZA
60%	2%	0.15%	270 g	about 24 h

IN SHORT

Mix strong flour with 60% water, 2% salt and 0.15% fresh yeast in the evening, let the dough rest for 15 minutes, then divide it into 270 g balls and put them into dough boxes. Let them rise overnight at room temperature for 12 to 14 hours until they have grown by about half, then put the whole box in the fridge. Take it out 2 hours before baking, stretch the balls by hand and bake them as hot as your oven goes.

Ingredients

INGREDIENT	BAKER'S %	2 PIZZAS	4 PIZZAS	6 PIZZAS	8 PIZZAS
Flour strong, with plenty of protein: check the pack, the more the better	100%	333 g	666 g	1,000 g	1,333 g
Water at room temperature	60%	200 g	400 g	600 g	800 g
Salt	2%	7 g	13 g	20 g	27 g
Fresh yeast too little for a kitchen scale: use a fine scale	0.15%	0.5 g	1 g	1.5 g	2 g
Dry yeast	0.05%	0.17 g	0.33 g	0.5 g	0.67 g

Balls of 270 g each. The calculator online works out any other amount.

What you need

Kitchen scale
for the flour, the water, the salt and the dough balls

Fine scale
weighs to 0.01 g, so the tiny amount of yeast is exact

Dough boxes with a lid
the way I recommend for every dough: the balls rise in them, and the whole box goes into the fridge

Dough scraper
keeps the work surface clean, divides the dough, and cuts the balls free in the box to lift them out

Oven with a grill function
with a pizza steel or stone. Alternatively a cast-iron pan for the stove, or a pizza oven

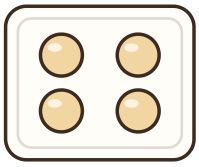
Semolina and a pizza peel
so the pizza slides into the oven

How it works: a day in the life of a dough ball

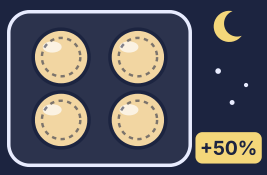
Example: pizza tomorrow at 8 pm. The dough does almost everything on its own; you step in four times.



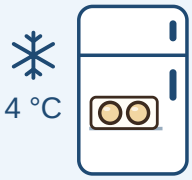
8 PM
Mix
Flour, water, salt and yeast, about 5 minutes by hand



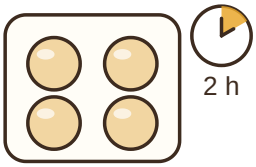
15 MINUTES LATER
Balls into the box
270 g each, lid on



OVERNIGHT
Let them rise
12–14 hours at room temperature, until they have grown by about half



IN THE MORNING
Into the fridge
the whole box. A pause until the evening, and longer is fine too



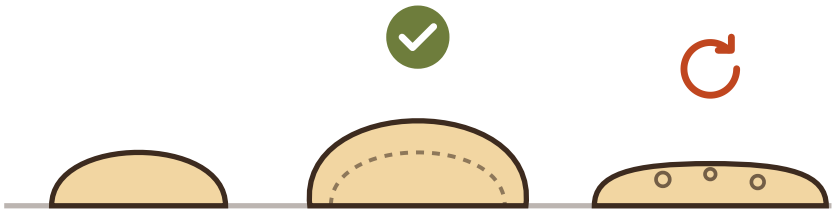
6 PM
Out of the fridge
2 hours to come up to room temperature; they are relaxed already



8 PM
Stretch, top, bake
from topping to oven in about 90 seconds, as hot as it goes

The ripeness check in the morning

This is how the balls in the box look from the side.



Too early
wait a little longer

Just right: +50%
into the fridge

Too far
reshape, let them rise again

Step by step

1 EVENING

Mix by hand for about 5 minutes

Put the flour, water, salt and yeast in a bowl and mix everything by hand for about 5 minutes. Don't knead hard: just mix until there is no dry flour and no lump left. Mixing by hand gives you a feel for the dough, which helps a lot at the start.

Then do the windowpane test: stretch a small piece so thin that light shines through it without tearing. If it holds, the dough is ready.

2 15 MINUTES AFTER MIXING

Let it rest first, then divide into balls

Don't shape the balls straight away: let the dough rest for 15 minutes after mixing. Then weigh pieces of 270 g and cut them off with the dough scraper. Shape each piece into a smooth ball by dragging it over the bare counter, without flour, so its surface tightens. Don't shape them too tight. Put the balls into the dough boxes and close the lid.

Not quite smooth yet? Wait another 15 minutes and shape them once more.

3 OVERNIGHT

Let them rise at room temperature

The boxes stay on the counter overnight. With this little yeast the balls need about 12 to 14 hours to grow by about half. The warmer your kitchen, the faster it goes: if it is warm, use slightly cooler water; below 20 °C, use twice the yeast.

4 IN THE MORNING

Grown by half? The whole box goes into the fridge

When the balls have grown by about 50%, put the whole box into the fridge. Left out, they would over-proof. In the fridge they wait for you until the evening, and at around 4 °C, after a while, nothing happens at all. So if your plans change, they simply stay in longer.

Are they very strongly fermented already? Then the box goes into the fridge straight away. Did they go too far and spread out flat? With yeast that's no drama: shape them into balls again and let them rise once more. With sourdough that doesn't work.

5 2 HOURS BEFORE BAKING

Take the box out

Take the box out of the fridge 2 hours before you want to bake, so the balls come up to room temperature. They are relaxed already: nobody has touched them since you shaped them the evening before, so they stretch easily.

6 STRETCHING

Stretch by hand, top quickly

Put plenty of semolina on the work surface, and on the balls too, so the pizza doesn't stick to the peel later. Cut each ball free in the box with the dough scraper, lift it out and set it down in the semolina. Press it flat from the centre outwards and leave the edge alone: that pushes the air into the rim. Then lift it at one edge and turn it, letting gravity stretch it, until the centre is only 1 to 2 mm thin.

From topping to oven you have about 90 seconds, never more than 2 minutes, or it starts to stick.

7 BAKING

Bake as hot as it goes

Home oven: switch on the grill function and turn the oven as hot as it goes. A pizza steel or stone makes it a little hotter still: heat it in the oven for at least 30 minutes and bake the pizza on it, close to the grill, until the rim is brown.

Cast-iron pan: turn the stove and the oven, with the grill function, to their highest setting. Put a little olive oil and semolina into the cold pan and spread them with a kitchen towel. Lay the stretched dough in the pan and pull it out to the edge: while the pan is cold, there's no hurry. Add the sauce and bake it on the stove for about 2 minutes, turning the pan so nothing burns in one spot. Then add the cheese and oil and put the pan under the grill, as close as it goes, for 60 to 90 seconds.

Pizza oven: at around 450 °C a pizza bakes in 60 to 90 seconds. Turn it while it bakes, so it browns evenly.

Variations

Without dough boxes: the whole dough in one container

Dough boxes are the way I recommend, for every dough, sourdough too. If you have none, let the whole dough rise overnight in one big container with a lid. It also takes less room in the fridge. In the morning, when it has grown by about half, the container goes into the fridge.

3 hours before baking, shape the balls and let them rest at room temperature under a damp tea towel. Freshly shaped balls need those 3 hours to relax; in dough boxes they had all night. If the dough is already very strongly fermented in the morning, give it one stretch and fold and put it straight into the fridge until 3 hours before baking.

Sourdough instead of yeast

Instead of the yeast, use 5% stiff sourdough starter, at about 60% hydration. For 4 pizzas that is **32 g** of starter with 647 g flour, 388 g water and 13 g salt. As with yeast, let the dough rest for 15 minutes after mixing, then divide it into balls and put them into the dough boxes. Sourdough forgives less than yeast: balls that went too far can't simply be shaped again. If that happens, mix the next dough with colder water or use even less starter. That makes sourdough pizza the most difficult of the variations.

Short on time: pizza in one or two hours

If you need to bake at short notice, use more yeast: 3% of the flour as fresh yeast, or 1% as dry yeast. For a super fast dough I recommend up to 1% enzyme-active (diastatic) dry malt as well. For 4 pizzas that is 666 g flour, 400 g water, 13 g salt, **20 g** of fresh yeast or 6.7 g of dry yeast, and up to 6.7 g of malt.

The malt is only a shortcut: its enzymes change the flour faster, so the pizza tastes better and the dough bakes better. A long fermentation does the same, which is why I always recommend the overnight rise. When you are short on time, though, this works well.

Shape the balls right after the 15 minutes' rest, not later; otherwise they rise too fast and you can no longer stretch them properly. As soon as the balls have grown by about half, stretch and bake. If a ball over-proofs because all that yeast works so fast, simply shape it again and wait a little.

What I deliberately leave out

- **Poolish and biga**
  I leave them out on purpose. In my own tests I couldn't taste a difference.
- **48 hours and more in the fridge**
  Some people keep their pizza dough in the fridge for days, and many recipes promise 48 hours. In my opinion that makes no sense at all: in the fridge the fermentation simply runs slower. This dough can do the same, it just stays in longer: at around 4 °C, after a while, nothing happens at all.
- **A fast dough as the default**
  With more yeast and a little malt it works in one or two hours; the amounts are above. What I recommend is overnight, with a small amount of fresh yeast.

Margherita

For the sauce I crush San Marzano tomatoes with a fork and add about 1 g of salt per 100 g. That's all. Per pizza: about 50 to 60 g of sauce, torn fior di latte, a few basil leaves and a little olive oil. Don't overload it.

Leftovers

Leftover dough bakes into a great bread. For two people I like to bake six pizzas and freeze three: let them cool, wrap them in cling film or an old pizza box and put them straight into the freezer.

The recipe online, with the calculator for any amount
https://pizza-calculator.the-bread-code.io/neapolitan-pizza-dough-recipe