



Perfect Pizza at Home

with

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Tools & Resources

Mise en Place: Tools & Ingredients



Mise en place is the French term meaning “Everything in its place.” For cooks, this means to get organized. The following list provides you with all the tools you will need to be organized and ready to make pizzas. If you don’t have a particular tool you can also, in many cases, improvise with other tools that you may have (for instance, a plastic bowl scraper is advised but you can also use a rubber or teflon spatula; an electric mixer is useful but you can also use a stainless steel bowl and mix with a large spoon). You will already have many of these tools and others are easily obtained at cookware stores. If you do plan to do a lot of baking or pizza making, I suggest investing in a small electric scale, any brand, but preferably one that offers both ounce and gram weights.

LIST OF SUPPLIES

Tools

- Mixing bowls (stainless steel if possible) of various sizes
- Measuring spoons and cups
- Electric scale, if possible
- Plastic bowl scraper
- Metal pastry or bench blade (also called a bencher)
- Rubber or teflon spatulas
- Pizza peel, wooden and/or metal (both, if possible)
- Baking stone (also called a pizza stone, the thicker the better – 1" thickness is ideal. They come in various sizes so be sure it fits in your oven)
- Electric mixer, such as KitchenAid or other brands
- Ladles of various sizes
- Large stainless steel or wooden spoons

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- Pizza knife (roller knife)
- Cutting boards
- Chef's knife for prepping toppings
- Food processor
- Cheese grater
- Sauce pans
- Plastic wrap
- Spray oil (aka, pan spray), or oil misters
- Baking parchment paper
- 9" cake pans for pan or Sicilian-style pizzas
- Sheet pans (typically 12" x 17")

Ingredients

- Bread flour and/or all purpose flour, unbleached if possible
- Whole wheat and/or rye flour
- Instant yeast (this may come under different marketing names such as Perfect Rise, Rapid Rise, Bread Machine Yeast, etc.), or active dry yeast, also sold as dry active yeast
- Salt, either kosher salt, or table salt (or any kind of favorite salt)
- Sugar or honey
- Dry aged cheeses such as: Parmesan, Asiago, Romano, or Dry Jack
- Semi-soft, moist cheeses such as: Mozzarella (both fresh and low-moisture), Fontina, Provolone, Cheddar, Swiss, Gouda, etc.
- Soft cheeses such as: Blue (Roquefort, Gorgonzola, Danish, Stilton, or any domestic), Ricotta, Crescenza-Stracchino, Burrata, etc.
- Canned tomato products, preferably whole, crushed or ground tomatoes, or tomato sauce, or tomato puree. These typically come in

28-ounce cans. You can also use your favorite brand of pizza sauce in jars.

- Olive and/or vegetable oil. The less expensive oils are good for use in doughs. Higher quality olive oil, such as Extra Virgin, is best used in toppings.
- Spray oil (see Tools above): This is both a tool and an ingredient, as it makes life easier when covering doughs or preparing baking parchment. Any brand is fine but look especially for olive oil sprays.
- Fresh and dried herbs and spices such as oregano, basil, parsley, marjoram, rosemary, black pepper, paprika, smoked paprika, granulated garlic, chili pepper flakes, etc.
- Favorite toppings, such as pepperoni, dried salami, sausage, bacon, ham, mushrooms, fresh basil, chicken or smoked chicken, clams (canned or fresh), shrimp, fresh garlic, etc.
- See recipes for pizza sauce, pesto, spicy garlic oil, and herb oil for other ingredient needs.



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10 Tips for Perfect Pizza



1. **The hotter the oven, the better the pizza; use convection if you have it.** The reason for using a super hot oven is because the longer the pizza takes to bake, the drier and more boring the crust will become; our goal is to create a crust with “snap” but also with moistness and a creamy texture. Four minutes or less is the ideal bake time, but most home ovens take anywhere from 5 to 8 minutes, so the closer you can get the bake time down to 4 minutes, the better will be your pizza.
2. **Wetter dough can stand up to the long bake times of home ovens better than drier dough.** Pizzerias typically bake at about 600 F (316 C). But home ovens rarely can get that hot, which means a longer time is needed to achieve the proper baking of both crust and topping. Our wetter dough recipes protect the dough during this longer bake, even if they are trickier to handle.
3. **The stretch and fold method allows you to work more water into the dough.** The folding technique creates a matrix of gluten threads, like a weave, that envelope the moisture, helping to achieve “tip number 2,” above.
4. **The more whole grain flour in your dough, the higher percentage of water the dough will require.** You can tweak the recipes by replacing any amount you desire of the white flour with an equal amount of whole grain flour, but will need an extra tablespoon of water for every ounce of whole grain flour you add.
5. **Our recipe for Neapolitan Dough uses American All-Purpose flour, not Italian -00- (Double Zero) flour.** In Naples, they do use their famous Italian flour, which cannot hold as much water as American flour due to the type of proteins in that flour and the high degree of starch content, but they also bake at 800 F (427 C), in about 75 seconds, so they don’t need as much water as American-style pizza. However, if you want to use Italian -00- flour (such as Caputo brand, or the like), feel free to try it – it’s tasty, for sure – but remember to lower the water content in our recipe by about 1 ounce (30 mL) or so. Personally, I prefer the al dente, toothsome quality of the American flours, but various brands have slightly different amounts and strengths of protein, so you may have to use slightly more or less water than the recipe suggests. In the end, the dough “tells” you what it needs, so listen to it and follow the texture description – “soft and supple,” “tacky,” etc. – to make your final tweaks.
6. **If you mess up your dough ball while trying to shape it flat – rips, holes, getting stuck on itself, dropping it on the counter, etc. – reform it into a smooth ball and put it at the end of any remaining dough balls, misting it with spray oil and covering it with plastic wrap.** Give it about 45 - 60 minutes to allow the gluten to relax and then try shaping it again. You can also put the reformed dough ball into a freezer bag and save it for another day.
7. **Some climates are drier than others and the flour, regardless of brand, is often drier too and, thus, requiring more water.** This often happens at higher altitudes, too, so let the dough dictate what it needs rather than adhering strictly to the written recipe.
8. **Lots of toppings are not always the best way to go on a pizza.** Quality over quantity should be the rule. Or, as we say, more isn’t always better; better is better.
9. **A baking stone is only helpful if it is thoroughly preheated.** It is a thermal mass and needs time to absorb the oven heat in order to radiate it back into the pizza crust, so allow a minimum of 45 minutes to preheat, even if the oven light indicates that the oven is ready.
10. **Unbleached flour tastes better than bleached flour.** The slight ivory tint of unbleached flour is composed of beta-carotene pigments which not only add flavor but also a nice aroma, which enhances the flavor.



WEBSITES & BOOKS

My own website, www.pizzaquest.com, is a fun place to visit for videos, recipes, guest columns, and links to ingredient suppliers and the like.

Other popular pizza websites include:

- www.pizzamaking.com
- slice.seriousseats.com
- www.pizzatherapy.com

There are many pizza books but these are the ones I'd suggest you add to your library:

- *American Pie: My Search for the Perfect Pizza*, by Peter Reinhart (Ten Speed Press, 2003). Okay, I'm biased but I think it's a great read and the best pizza book out there.
- *Pizza: A Slice of Heaven*, by Ed Levine (Universe, 2005). A terrific compendium of pizza passion and reviews by the founder of the great website, seriousseats.com.
- *Pizza*, by Diane Morgan and Tony Gemignani (Chronicle Books, 2005). Lots of great recipes and tips from world champion pizzaiolo, Tony Gemignani.
- *The Great Chicago-Style Pizza Cookbook*, by Pasquale Bruno, Jr. (McGraw-Hill, 1983). For those who love Chicago-style, this is the book to have.
- *Pizza: From Its Italian Origins to the Modern Table*, by Roario Buonassisi (Firefly Books, 2000). A beautiful, informative book, translated from the original Italian version.

TOOLS & INGREDIENTS

The King Arthur Flour Co.

A favorite go-to website for tools and ingredient. The website has many products not found in the King Arthur Catalog, so you should request the catalog but also check out the website for specialty flour blends and for a list of their excellent classes in Norwich, Vt. www.kingarthurfLOUR.com

Sur la Table

These stores exist in many cities, so you can find

many tools there but, if you don't live near one, you can order even more items from their website.

www.surlatable.com

Bob's Red Mill

An excellent source of small batch specialty flours, including a full array of gluten-free flours. Available at many stores and also via the web at

www.bobsredmill.com.

The New York Bakers

A new company that makes available small bags of unique, specialty bread and pizza flours.

www.nybakers.com

The Joy of Gluten-Free, Sugar-Free Baking

The official website for my latest book, co-authored with Denene Wallace, with links to a number of companies where you can get the best prices for gluten-free and low-carb ingredients, as well as recipe updates and tips.

www.thejoyofgluten-freesugar-freebaking.com

BelGioioso Cheese Inc.

I am a huge advocate of supporting local and other domestic cheese producers whenever possible. So look for local, regional cheese makers at nearby farm markets and the like. However, if you want to learn about the wide array of Italian cheeses and their flavor properties, check out the BelGioioso Cheese website at www.belgioioso.com. They also have a video on how to make fresh mozzarella cheese that is very informative. BelGioioso is one of many fine domestic cheese companies, many of them based in Wisconsin, that make award winning international-style cheese using local milk.

Craftsy

[Artisan Cheese Making with Mary Karlin](#). A wonderful course so that you, too, can become a local cheesemaker.

Forno Bravo

They not only make some of the finest wood-fired ovens but also have an internet store featuring the finest pizza tools and ingredients.

www.fornobravo.com