

Lobo's Simplified Pizza Instructions

1/13/10

1. Oven preparation

Put your baking stone on the top rack of your oven, such that there is about 4" to 6" between the rack and the top of the oven. This is to simulate the temperature distribution which exists in a wood-fired bake oven, in which the upper region is hotter than the floor.

Preheat the oven with the stone in it, and gradually bring the temp (bake setting) up to 550F. Let the stone soak in the heat for at least an hour while you prepare the pizza.

2. Dough preparation

Into Kitchen Aid mixer bowl -

- 1.5 cups water plus 2 tablespoons (cold ok)
- 3 teaspoons bread machine yeast from jar
- 1 tablespoon honey

Install paddle mixer attachment.

Mix at #3 speed for 3 minutes to integrate honey

Remove paddle from mixer.

Add to mixer bowl -

- 1 cup semolina flour (from your local co-op or natural foods store)
- 2 cups King Arthur bread flour

Install dough hook in mixer.

Mix at #2 speed for 5 minutes.

Let dough rest for 20 minutes in mixer bowl.

Add

- ¼ cup bread flour
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt

Mix at #2 speed for 10 minutes.

Turn the dough out onto counter surface liberally floured with bread flour.

Knead the dough lump for about 5 minutes with your hands, folding it in half over on itself, pushing your hands into the lump hard, and then rotating it a little bit and folding it again, etc. Keep flouring your hands and the surface as required to keep the dough from sticking.

After kneading, cut the dough lump in half and roll each half into a ball. Each ball will make one pizza.

Let each ball rise for at 1-3 hours in covered bowls greased with olive oil.

3. Forming the pizza crust

Dust semolina flour onto a flat surface and put one dough ball on it.

Flatten out the ball with your hands starting at the center and gradually working toward the outside. Try to leave the outside rim pretty much alone. Form it to a diameter or about 10 to 12 inches.

Stretch it out on the board, or stretch it on the back of your fists. No need to throw it up in the air.

4. Moving the dough to the peel

Put a layer of semolina flour onto a wooden pizza peel or whatever surface you are going to use to put it into the oven. This semolina acts like ball bearings which will allow you to slide the pizza off of the peel and onto the hot stone.

Take the dough off the floured surface where you have been forming it, and drape it onto the peel.

Give the peel a shake back and forth to make sure the dough slides freely. If it doesn't, pick up the dough and spread some more semolina flour on the peel.

5. Toppings

Don't load up too much on top. Too much topping will insulate the dough from the heat of the oven, and you won't get a great crust.

Also, don't put the cheese on it at this time. Save the cheese for later. The cheese does not need to cook as long as the rest of the pie, so we add it after the pie has cooked a little.

While you are adding toppings such as tomato sauce (thin coating), mushrooms, caramelized onions, sausage, roasted peppers, etc), make sure the crust will slide around on the semolina flour. Shake the peel back and forth to make sure it is free from time to time. If it sticks in a certain area, gently lift the dough up at this spot and toss some more semolina flour under it (like sweeping something under a rug).

6. Baking

When the pie (without cheese) is ready to go into the oven, paint olive oil around the bare outer rim of the dough. This gives good color and flavor and texture when baked. Be careful to apply the olive oil to the dough only – don't let it drip over the edge onto the peel, as this will impede sliding the dough off the peel.

Baking (continued)

Shuffle the pizza from the peel onto the stone, starting with the far edge. Once this far edge makes contact with the stone, then you can shake and shuffle the rest of the dough onto the stone as you withdraw the peel.

At 550F, cook your pizza (without cheese) for about 3 minutes, or until you see the edges of the crust getting light golden brown.

At this point, scoop the pie off of the stone, take it out of the oven, and add the cheese topping.

Put the pizza back on the stone, and bake it for about another 3 minutes, or until the crust is exactly the crustiness you want it.

Scoop it out of the oven, sprinkle a big pinch of coarse sea salt on it, and sprinkle more olive oil on it if you wish. If you want just a taste more of cheese, grate a small amount over the top using a microplane.

Cut it into 6 pieces (8 pieces would be too many to eat).

Would you please send any comments you have to Lobo at avpescas@gmail.com