

For the best pizza you'll ever taste,
make your own. And don't forget the
calzone, focaccia, and bread.

How to make lots of

If all you know about procuring pizza is dialing a phone number, it's time you learned to think, and cook, outside the box.

With a few straightforward techniques, your kitchen can become your favorite pizzeria. For this second installment in our year-long Cooking Class 2000 series (see "Course Syllabus" on page 140), all you need are the simplest of ingredients: flour, water, yeast, and salt—and your favorite toppings. Add some friends, too; you'll enjoy their company, and if you play it smart, you can get them to help.

Making pizza is really all about making dough, so that's where you'll start. Think of it as brains and brawn. Once you combine the ingredients—the headwork—it's time to apply the muscle. Bakers call it kneading. It's hardly brute strength, although it can be a nice way to work out some of the day's stress. Once that's done, relax with your pals for an hour or so while the dough rises.

Then it's playtime. Shape the dough in the general direction of a pizza. Yes, you really can spin the dough in the air, but you can also just pat it out by hand or roll it with a pin. Add the toppings, pop it into the oven, and

try not to anticipate the taste of that first bite too much. And when the pizza is ready, don't pounce on it right away. Remember, the object is mouth *feel*, not mouth *burn*.

By the way, there are considerable secondary payoffs here: Learning to make this dough puts you directly on the fast track for cranking out an infinite number of calzones, focaccias, and even some rustic breads. You might legitimately think of them as pizzas with a few tweaks.

Just throw away the delivery guy's phone number—you won't be needing it anymore.

Today's Lesson Plan

These are the seven recipes you'll learn to make in this installment of Cooking Class 2000.

- All-purpose Pizza Dough
- Three-Cheese Pizza Bianca
- Tomato-and-Basil Pizza
- Shrimp-and-Prosciutto Calzones
- Sausage, Fennel, and Provolone Calzones
- Herbed Focaccia
- Two-Cheese Oregano Bread

Recipes by Sharon Sanders

PHOTOGRAPHY: RANDY MAYOR / STYLING: LYDIA E. DEGARIIS

A smiling man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a white apron, is holding a large, round pizza topped with tomato sauce, basil, and other ingredients. He is looking down at the pizza with a smile. The background is slightly blurred, showing a kitchen setting with a wooden cutting board and a metal bowl.

dough

Techniques You'll Learn

Working with yeast

Kneading dough

Shaping dough

Baking pizza, calzones,
focaccia, and bread

Tomato-and-Basil Pizza
(recipe on page 134)

tips

Making your own dough doesn't require precision timing. Make it in the morning and place in the refrigerator until ready to use, or make it up to an hour before you rise it. You can also make it in a food processor or stand-up mixer with the kneading attachment.

All-purpose Pizza Dough

This basic recipe, which can be used to make calzones, focaccia, or bread, can easily be doubled.

- 1 package dry yeast
(about 2¼ teaspoons)
- 1¼ cups warm water
(100° to 110°)
- 3¼ cups all-purpose flour, divided
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Cooking spray

1. Dissolve yeast in warm water in a large bowl, and let stand 5 minutes. Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups, and level with a knife. Add 1 cup flour and salt to yeast mixture, and stir well. Stir in 2 cups flour, 1 cup at a time, stirring well after each addition. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes), and add enough of the remaining flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, to prevent the dough from sticking to hands (dough will feel tacky).

2. Place the dough in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 1 hour or until doubled in size. (Press two fingers into dough. If an indentation remains, the dough has risen enough.) Punch dough down; cover and let rest 5 minutes. Shape dough according to the recipe directions. Yield: 1 pizza dough.

NOTE: To freeze, let the dough rise once, punch down, and shape into a ball. Place in a heavy-duty zip-top plastic bag coated with cooking spray; squeeze out all air, and seal. Store in freezer for up to 1 month. To thaw, place dough in refrigerator 12 hours or overnight. With scissors, cut away the plastic bag. Place dough on a floured surface, and shape according to recipe directions. Alternatively, for pizza, you can make the dough, roll out, wrap in foil, and freeze. To bake, remove from freezer; top and bake according to recipe instructions (no need to thaw).

(Totals are for entire All-purpose Pizza Dough) CALORIES 1,505 (3% from fat); FAT 5g (sat 0.8g, mono 0.7g, poly 2.1g); PROTEIN 44.6g; CARB 312.7g; FIBER 12.9g; CHOL 0mg; IRON 20mg; SODIUM 1,184mg; CALC 66mg

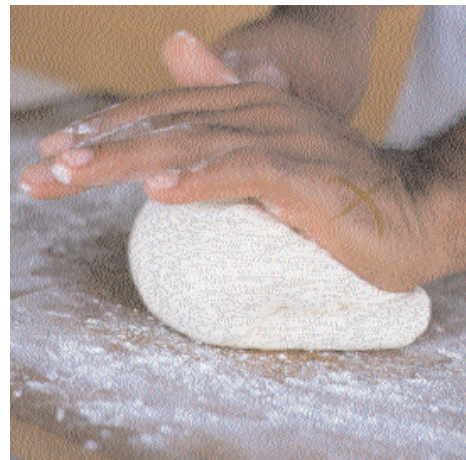


All-purpose Pizza Dough

1. Once the yeast is dissolved, gradually add about 2 cups flour, stirring with a wooden spoon. You may need to add more or use less flour. A slightly sticky dough, though messy to handle, will make a more tender crust or bread.

2. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface, and knead until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes). To knead, push out the mound of dough with the heels of your hands, fold it over, give it a quarter-turn, and repeat.

The dough should become smooth. If necessary, add slightly more flour while kneading.



3. Place dough in a large bowl, and let rise in a warm place about an hour or until doubled in size. If your kitchen is chilly, place the bowl in a cool oven with a cup of boiling water or on top of the refrigerator. The dough is ready when you can press it with a few fingers and the indentations remain. Just prior to shaping, punch down the dough, and let it rest for five minutes. This important step gives the gluten time to relax, making the dough easier to roll and shape.

Tomato-and-Basil Pizza

We love this pizza's flavor with Gruyère cheese, but you can use mozzarella if you prefer.

All-purpose Pizza Dough

- 2 teaspoons yellow cornmeal
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- Cooking spray
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3 ounces) shredded Gruyère or Swiss cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup thinly sliced fresh basil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 ounce) grated fresh Parmesan cheese

1. Roll the prepared dough into a 15-inch circle on a floured surface. Place the dough on a 15-inch round pizza pan sprinkled with cornmeal. Cover the dough, and let rise in a warm place 20 minutes or until puffy.
2. Preheat oven to 450°.
3. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic; sauté 30 seconds. Add tomatoes; cook 5 minutes or until liquid almost evaporates.
4. Lightly coat dough with cooking spray. Spread tomato mixture over dough, leaving a 1-inch border, and top with Gruyère, basil, and Parmesan. Bake at 450° for 15 minutes or until golden. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 2 slices).

CALORIES 547 (21% from fat); FAT 12.9g (sat 5.9g, mono 4.7g, poly 13g); PROTEIN 21.7g; CARB 84.6g; FIBER 4g; CHOL 29mg; IRON 5.8mg; SODIUM 668mg; CALC 363mg

Three-Cheese Pizza Bianca

Bianca, which means white in Italian, refers to a dish without tomato sauce. You won't miss it.

All-purpose Pizza Dough

- 2 teaspoons yellow cornmeal
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Cooking spray
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fat-free ricotta cheese
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (3 ounces) finely shredded Gruyère cheese
- 2 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) grated fresh Parmesan cheese

1. Roll the prepared dough into a 15-inch circle on a floured surface. Place the dough on a 15-inch round pizza pan sprinkled with cornmeal. Cover the dough, and let rise in a warm place 20 minutes or until puffy.
2. Preheat oven to 450°.
3. Combine oil and garlic in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at MEDIUM-HIGH (70% power) for 1 minute or until bubbly. Cool 10 minutes.
4. Lightly coat dough with cooking spray. Combine garlic mixture and ricotta. Spread the ricotta mixture over dough, leaving a 1-inch border. Sprinkle with Gruyère and Parmesan. Bake at 450° for 15 minutes or until golden. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 2 slices).

CALORIES 541 (19% from fat); FAT 11.5g (sat 5.1g, mono 4.3g, poly 1.2g); PROTEIN 25.6g; CARB 83.5g; FIBER 3.3g; CHOL 31mg; IRON 5.1mg; SODIUM 449mg; CALC 356mg

pizza

To shape the pizza, pat the dough with floured hands, or stretch it with a rolling pin, starting at the

center of the dough and moving toward the edge. To get an even crust, roll the dough into a 15-inch circle. For a free-form shape, try stretching the dough with your fists, as they do in pizzerias.



Dough Tips

- While kneading, massage the dough gently, as though it were a baby. If you overwork the dough, it will absorb too much flour, producing a dense, heavy bread or a dry, tough crust. If you're a novice, be sure to set your kitchen timer for 10 minutes so you won't be inclined to over- or underknead.
- Make sure your oven is preheated. To produce a crunchy crust, you need to bake pizza, calzones, and focaccia in a very hot oven (from 450° to 550°).
- Stretching the dough with your fists is a great way to shape the pizza because you get a more natural look, with bumps and blisters. The dough may tear slightly; just pinch it back together.
- If you don't have a pizza pan, simply use a large baking sheet.

Use fresh tomatoes

if you have them in place of canned.

To slice the basil

stack the leaves, and roll them up as you would a cigar; then slice crosswise.

Placing the cheese

on the bottom keeps the crust from getting soggy.

Infusing oil

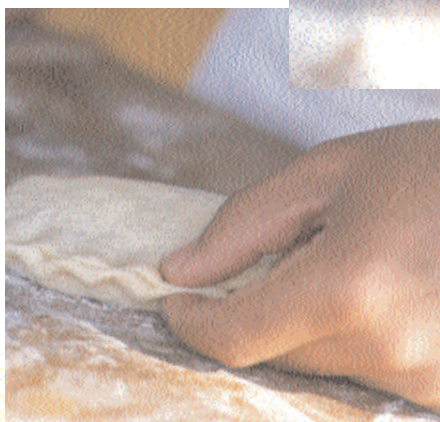
with the garlic in the microwave helps disperse the pungency of the garlic.

1 calzones

The new
low-fat
chicken
sausage will
work great
here, too.

If you can't
find fennel,
increase the
bell pepper
to 3 cups.
Green bell
peppers will
also work.

1. **Divide** dough into 6 equal portions; shape each into a ball. Roll each portion out to a 6-inch circle. Place filling mixture on half of dough, leaving a 1-inch border.



2. **Fold** dough over until edges meet; then bring bottom edge of dough over top, and crimp.



Sausage, Fennel, and Provolone Calzones



Sausage, Fennel, and Provolone Calzones

Add a tossed green salad to these calzones for a complete meal.

- 4 ounces sweet Italian sausage
- 2 cups thinly sliced fennel bulb (about 1 medium bulb)
- 1½ cups sliced red bell pepper
- 1 cup vertically sliced onion
- All-purpose Pizza Dough
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- ¾ cup (3 ounces) grated sharp provolone cheese
- 1 tablespoon yellow cornmeal

1. Remove casing from sausage. Cook sausage in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until browned, stirring to crumble. Add fennel, bell pepper, and onion. Cover, reduce heat, and cook for 9 minutes, stirring frequently. Cool slightly.

2. Preheat oven to 450°.

3. Divide the prepared dough evenly into 6 equal portions on a lightly floured surface; shape each piece into a ball. Roll each ball into a 6-inch circle. Combine egg and water with a whisk in a small bowl. Brush edge of each circle with egg mixture; reserve remaining egg mixture.

4. Place ⅔ cup sausage mixture on half of each circle, leaving a 1-inch border, and sprinkle each with 2 tablespoons cheese. Fold dough over sausage mixture until edges almost meet. Bring bottom edge over top edge; crimp edges of dough with fingers to form a rim. Place the calzones on a baking sheet sprinkled with cornmeal. Brush tops with reserved egg mixture. Bake at 450° for 12 minutes or until golden brown. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 calzone).

CALORIES 409 (26% from fat); FAT 11.7g (sat 4.9g, mono 4.2g, poly 1.4g); PROTEIN 16.3g; CARB 58.9g; FIBER 3.3g; CHOL 61mg; IRON 5.1mg; SODIUM 474mg; CALC 162mg

Shrimp-and-Prosciutto Calzones

Fontina cheese works well in this calzone, but you can also use Swiss, Monterey Jack, or mozzarella. Serve this with a side of broccoli or a tossed green salad.

- 1 pound medium cooked shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded fontina cheese
- 1 ounce diced prosciutto or ham
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh chives

All-purpose Pizza Dough

- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 tablespoon yellow cornmeal

1. Preheat oven to 450°.
2. Combine the first 5 ingredients in a bowl.
3. Divide the prepared dough evenly into 6 equal portions on a lightly floured surface; shape each piece into a ball. Roll each ball into a 6-inch circle. Combine egg and water with a whisk in a small bowl. Brush edge of each circle with egg mixture; reserve remaining egg mixture.
4. Place $\frac{1}{6}$ of shrimp mixture on half of each circle. Fold the dough over shrimp mixture until edges almost meet. Bring the bottom edge over top edge; crimp edges of the dough with fingers to form a rim. Place calzones on a baking sheet sprinkled with cornmeal. Brush tops with the reserved egg mixture. Bake calzones at 450° for 12 minutes or until golden brown. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 calzone).

CALORIES 408 (19% from fat); FAT 8.6g (sat 4.3g, mono 2.4g, poly 1.1g); PROTEIN 26.4g; CARB 53.6g; FIBER 2.2g; CHOL 172mg; IRON 5.3mg; SODIUM 558mg; CALC 143mg

Make sure
to finely chop the prosciutto so that it disperses well.

To save time,
buy boiled or steamed shrimp from a local seafood market.



focaccia

After rolling out dough, make indentations in top of dough with a wooden spoon or your fingers.



Herbed Focaccia

The coarse texture of kosher salt provides a wonderful crunch and salty burst on this focaccia, reminiscent of a big, soft pretzel. Kosher salt comes in a large box found next to the salt and spices in your supermarket. It takes a bit of work to knead in the herbs, but be persistent so they are well-distributed.

All-purpose Pizza Dough

- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
 - 1 teaspoon dried rubbed sage
 - 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
 - 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- Cooking spray
- 1 tablespoon yellow cornmeal
 - 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt

1. Roll prepared dough into a 12 x 8-inch rectangle on a floured surface. Sprinkle the parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme over the dough. Fold the dough into thirds. Knead lightly 1 minute or until the herbs are blended into the dough. Cover and let stand

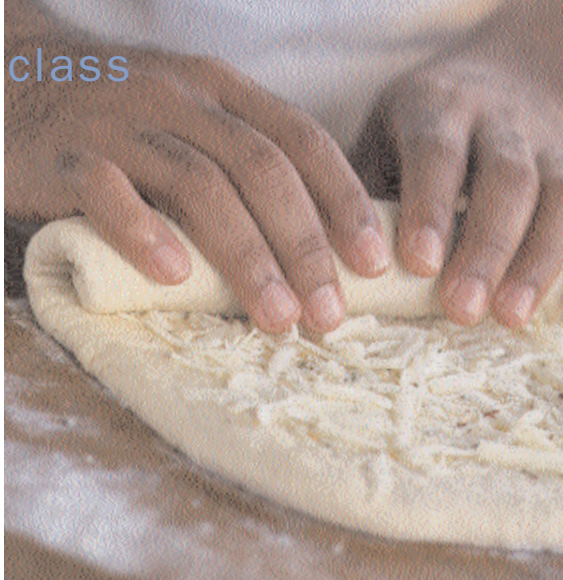
for 10 minutes. Roll dough into a 14 x 12-inch rectangle. Place dough on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray and sprinkled with cornmeal. Cover and let rise in a warm place 35 minutes or until doubled in size.

2. Preheat oven to 450°.
3. Uncover the dough. Make indentations in top of dough using the handle of a wooden spoon or your fingertips. Gently brush the dough with olive oil. Sprinkle with kosher salt. Bake dough at 450° for 15 minutes or until browned. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 slice).

CALORIES 209 (11% from fat); FAT 2.5g (sat 0.4g, mono 1.4g, poly 0.5g); PROTEIN 5.7g; CARB 40.2g; FIBER 1.8g; CHOL 0mg; IRON 2.9mg; SODIUM 295mg; CALC 16mg

You can shape this bread as two baguettes or *boules* (round loaves).

Vary the cheese and herbs for different versions on this bread.



bread

Sprinkle cheeses and herbs over dough, and roll up jelly-roll fashion. This makes for an even, well-shaped loaf.

Course Syllabus

Now that you've mastered dough, return in April for some really great sauces. And don't miss out on the rest of our Cooking Class 2000 series designed to equip you with all the basics to master your kitchen. Here's what's upcoming.

April: How To Make Great Sauces

May: How To Stir-fry With Style

June: How To Master a Grill

July: How To Bake a Pie to Die For

August: How To Cook Eggs-tatically

September: How To Make (Great) Pasta Dishes

October: How To Roast a Chicken and Rave

November: How To Make Plenty of Bread

December: How To Make the Ultimate Light Cookie

Notes From Home

During this year-long series, please let us know if we're giving you what you need. E-mail us (cookinglight@spc.com), fax us (205/877-6600), or write us (Cooking Class 2000, *Cooking Light*, 2100 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209).



Two-Cheese Oregano Bread

All-purpose Pizza Dough	¼ teaspoon dried oregano
½ cup (2 ounces) shredded provolone cheese	⅛ teaspoon crushed red pepper
2 tablespoons (½ ounce) grated fresh Parmesan cheese	1 tablespoon yellow cornmeal
	1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil

1. Roll prepared dough into a 12 x 8-inch rectangle. Combine cheeses, oregano, and red pepper; sprinkle over dough, leaving a ½-inch border. Beginning with a long side, roll up jelly-roll fashion, pressing firmly to eliminate air pockets; pinch seam and ends to seal. Place roll, seam side down, on a baking sheet sprinkled with cornmeal. Cut slits in top of dough using a sharp knife. Cover and let rise in a warm place 40 minutes or until doubled in size.

2. Preheat oven to 450°.

3. Brush loaf with oil. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes or until loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 2 slices).

CALORIES 230 (14% from fat); FAT 3.6g (sat 1.7g, mono 1.2g, poly 0.4g); PROTEIN 8.2g; CARB 40.2g; FIBER 1.7g; CHOL 6mg; IRON 2.6mg; SODIUM 243mg; CALC 87mg



Cookbook author Sharon Sanders has written about the food and culture of Italy for the Chicago Sun-Times and other publications.