

Christian's Deep Dish Pizza Recipe

This recipe comes from years of practice, refinement, and weight gain. I've never written a recipe before, so good luck following it! There are three ingredients lists – sauce, dough, toppings. Hopefully the cooking instructions make sense. The sauce can be made up to two days in advance and the dough can be made the day before and left in the fridge until you're ready. If you want day-of pizza, give yourself about 3.5 hours from start to glorious, delicious consumption.

Sauce

Ingredients

- 28 oz can of crushed tomatoes (Cento is my favorite)
- 6 oz can of tomato paste
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 tbsp of grated parmesan/pecorino/romano cheese (your choice)
- 2 tsp oregano
- 3 tbsp dried basil
- 1 tbsp crushed garlic (or more if you love garlic and hate vampires)
- 2 tsp crushed red pepper (or more if you want some more heat)

Preparation

You don't need to be too precise with the ingredients (aside from the tomatoes and paste). I just wing it, but the proportions are about right.

1. Combine everything in a bowl
2. That's all!
3. I find that the flavors blend better if you let the sauce sit covered in the fridge for a few hours (or 1-2 days)

Dough

Ingredients

- 3 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup stone ground corn meal
- 1 packet rapid rise / instant yeast
- 1 ½ tsp sea salt
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 ¼ cups lukewarm (95-100 degree) filtered water
- 4 tbsp melted butter
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 4 tbsp softened butter

Preparation

1. Mix all the dry ingredients (flour, cornmeal, yeast, sugar, salt) together in a deep bowl. A stand mixer is ideal, but you can use a hand mixer, too. I usually let the mixer (with a dough hook) run for about a minute.
2. Take a deep breath and reflect on the fact that you're making deep dish dough. Yes! You're really doing it!
3. Pour the melted butter and then the water into the bowl and mix it all together on low for about 2 minutes. If the ingredients aren't coming together cleanly, drizzle in a little more water.
4. Turn up the mixer to medium-low and keep at it until the dough comes together in a ball (another 2 minutes). You might have to scrape the sides a little.
5. Grab the dough and transfer it to a lightly floured board. If there is still a bit of loose dry mixture left unincorporated, just pour it on top of the dough.
6. Knead by hand for another 2 minutes or so while singing the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* theme song. This part is critical.
7. Pour the olive oil into a glass or Pyrex bowl. Transfer the dough ball and roll it around to coat it. Place the dough seam-down. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap.
8. Put the bowl in a warmish place. If you're at room temperature, put a towel over the bowl. You can also heat your oven to about 100 degrees and put the bowl in there.
9. Let the dough rise for about 90 minutes, until its roughly doubled in size.
10. Once it's doubled, roll the dough with a pin to about 14" x 14" (on a clean surface, like a pastry mat).
11. With a spatula or bread knife, cover the face-up side with the softened butter.
12. Yell "YUM!" as loudly as your circumstances allow.
13. Starting on one end, roll up the dough (kind of like a cinnamon roll). Some butter will probably ooze out. Your doctor will thank you for failing to keep it in the dough.
14. Use the rolling pin to flatten out the dough into a long rectangle.
15. Grab both ends of the buttery rectangle and fold them to the center. Then form it back into a ball, put it in the oiled bowl again, cover with plastic, and toss it in the fridge for about an hour (or longer if you aren't ready to cook yet).
16. Do a double-fist pump because you just finished the hardest part. Next step: PIZZA PARTY!

Pizza Toppings

- 8 oz. low-moisture whole milk shredded mozzarella
- 8 oz. shredded extra sharp white cheddar (Cabot Seriously Sharp is excellent)
- 6 oz. of fresh ciliegine mozzarella, patted dry and sliced into halves
- Grated parmesan/pecorino/romano cheese
- Optional: uncased spicy Italian sausage (cooked), thick cut pepperoni, chopped bacon (cooked), sliced meatballs, diced red onion, sautéed yellow onion, red or green bell peppers
- Absolutely Forbidden: mushrooms, olives, anchovies

Make the Pizza

1. Pull the dough out of the fridge 30 minutes before you're ready to cook.
2. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees (Fahrenheit, not Kelvin).
3. Using the end of a stick of butter, liberally cover a 12" cast iron skillet. Spare no expense. You need to grease this baby or else your crust will stick during cooking and your night will be completely ruined.
4. Remove the dough from the bowl and stretch it gently. Start in the middle and work your way around the edges. Be careful though – if you pull too fast, you'll rip holes in the dough. It's not as elastic as other kinds of dough.
5. Place the dough in the center of the skillet and use your fingers to press it evenly all the way up the sides.
6. Cheese goes on the bottom. Add a layer of shredded mozzarella, then a layer of fresh mozzarella, then a layer of shredded cheese. Use all the cheese unless you're also adding meat or veggies (see next).
7. Toppings go in the middle. If you are adding meat or veggies, add that next and then top with another light layer of cheese (in no particular order). If you try adding mushrooms, anchovies, or olives, stand in front of a mirror and apologize to yourself. What were you thinking?!
8. Sauce goes on top. You probably won't need the entire batch of sauce, but use a lot of it and make sure it fully covers the pie. You want a thick layer of sauce on top.
9. Put the skillet in the oven and cook for 30-35 minutes. During that time, think about the things in life that make you happy. Pizza will make you even happier.
10. By 30 minutes, the crust should be golden brown, maybe even very slightly burned. That's how you'll know it's ready.
11. Let it sit for 3 minutes outside of the oven.
12. Using a sturdy spatula and oven mitts, carefully slide the pizza to a cutting surface.
13. Coat the top of the pie with grated cheese.
14. Let it sit for another 10-15 minutes. This part is important for the integrity of the pizza!
15. Using a giant knife, slice the pizza in half. Some cheese will run out onto the cutting board. Admire it. Then scoop it on to a plate with your slice.
16. Congratulations! You're a deep dish expert now!