

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S KITCHEN

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JERRY'S PRIMO PIZZA

2005 – Jerry Bell

Makes 4 pizzas

Ingredients for dough:

1 1/2 cup warm water (100 to 110 degrees)
2 tsp sugar
2 pkg. fast acting yeast
4 cups bread flour. All purpose flour won't work as well but can be used in a pinch.
1 tsp kosher salt
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil – for the dough
3 tsp extra virgin olive oil – for coating and brushing
Corn meal for dusting your stone & peel.
Flour for your work surface and rolling pin, if used.

Ingredients for sauce:

1 Cup of high quality marinara sauce – made with extra virgin olive oil.
1 tsp. lemon juice (optional – see directions)
1 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp. oregano
1/2 tsp. basil

Put the yeast and sugar into a small glass bowl or measuring cup. Add 1/2 cup of water. Make sure the water is between 100 and 110 degrees. Higher temperature might kill the yeast and lower temperature won't activate it. Whisk well and let proof for 10 minutes. It should develop a very frothy head and smell a lot like beer. Don't drink it, though.

In your large mixer bowl, combine the salt, olive oil, 1 cup of warm water and the yeast mixture. Slowly add the flour. Use the beater to mix the ingredients. Start at the lowest speed setting to keep from blowing flour all over the place. When all the flour has been added switch to the dough hook and knead the dough for 10 minutes at medium speed. If you see the dough climbing the hook just speed up the mixer for a few seconds so it will throw the dough off the hook. The texture of the dough should be soft and smooth. If it's still sticky add a bit more flour.

Roll the dough into a ball and place into a bowl that has been coated with olive oil. Cover with a towel and set aside in a warm area for about an hour to allow the dough to rise. It should double in volume.

The next step is to punch down the dough but before you do, set your oven to 500 degrees and let it preheat while the dough is doing its second rise. Remember to sprinkle your stone with corn meal before you slide on the pizza.

Now you can punch down the dough and let it rise a second time for about 45 minutes. After the second rise cut the dough in quarters. Makes four pizzas.

While all this rising and heating is going on you have plenty of time to make the pizza sauce. Put 1 cup of high quality marinara sauce into a saucepan. Add 1 tsp lemon juice (this gives it a very slightly tangy flavor which I prefer. For a sweeter taste just eliminate the lemon juice), 1 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese, 1/2 tsp oregano and 1/2 tsp. basil. Warm over low heat for 15 minutes. This helps the flavors blend.

Sprinkle flour on your counter top or a large cutting board. Roll (easiest) or hand form the dough into a large circle that's about the same size as your pizza peel. 1/16 inch thick gives you a thin crust pizza but one that's not crackery, dry or brittle. If you prefer a thicker crust roll your dough about 3/16" thick. Brush the outside 1" edge with olive oil. This will help give it a nice golden brown color. Dock all but this 1" border. Docking prevents large air bubbles from forming in the crust when it's cooking. If you don't own a dough docker, you can use a fork to prick the dough thoroughly. Gently place the dough on a pizza peel that's been liberally sprinkled with corn meal. Give it a bit of a shake to make sure it's not sticking to the peel. Spread a layer of pizza sauce on the crust, sprinkle on a layer of pizza cheese (typically a blend of Mozzarella, Romano, Parmesan and Provolone) and add your toppings of choice.

Cook for about 12 to 14 minutes or until the cheese is bubbly and the edges are a nice golden brown. This will vary depending on toppings used and oven temperature.

Storing pizza dough – This is a topic of much controversy. Personally, I recommend not freezing it. Form your leftover dough into a ball and lightly coat it with olive oil. Put it into a zip lock bag. Store it in the fridge and use it within 3 or 4 days.

I've provided this recipe for your dining pleasure and I encourage you to share it with your relatives, friends and anyone else who enjoys good food. If you want to post one of my recipes on your blog or another website I ask that you please credit: Jerry Bell / Jbellphotography.com