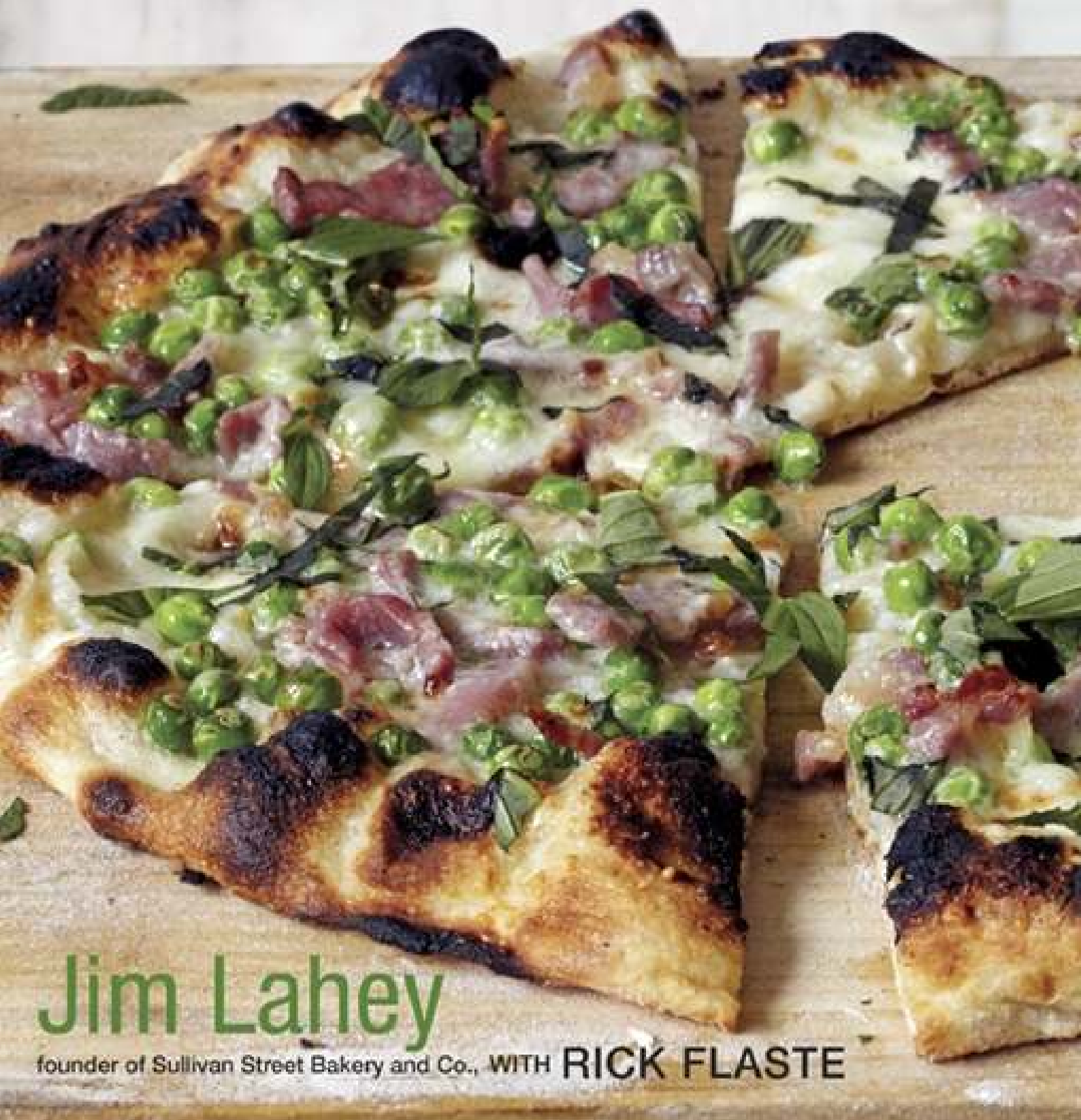


# MY PIZZA

the easy **no-knead** way to make spectacular pizza at home



**Jim Lahey**

founder of Sullivan Street Bakery and Co., WITH RICK FLASTE

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Dedicated in loving memory

to my dad,  
DICK LAHEY

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# INTRODUCTION

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In the early days of my Manhattan pizza restaurant, a middle-aged woman came through the front door, her eyes widened by the crowd that had been drawn to the place even before it had officially opened. She was wearing a huge white hairy coat—which meant she was going to take up about two spots at one of the long communal tables. She wedged herself in and ordered a pie—I think it was a Margherita—and as soon as it arrived she called over the manager. She told him that nothing about the pizza was the way it was “supposed” to be. It had too little sauce, she said. The crust was too dark, and it was too firm besides.

As anyone who has baked from my book *My Bread*—based on my method for a stunningly easy, rustic no-knead loaf—already knows, I usually diverge from the well-worn road and travel my own way.

That’s not to say that, in creating my pizzas, I’m coming to them without an authentic background. I’ve spent many months traveling throughout Italy, always learning as I go, searching for the bread and pizza standards that appeal most to my own sensibility, my palate, and my strong (some would say headstrong) feelings about the art of cooking and baking. My first trip to Rome just blew me away—the beauty, the produce, the bread. Of course, I’ve also been to Naples (the Italian pizza’s heartland), but I definitely don’t want you to think this book is some kind of grab-bag of Neapolitan pizzas. As much as I admire the intense appreciation for ingredients there, I have frequently been disappointed by the pizzas many of which appeal to a tourist-grade lowest common denominator. In a nation of such beauty and—in the good times—affluence, Naples has stood out too regularly for its episode of crime and poverty. Too many pizza bakers don’t worry much about whether the tomatoes in the sauce are the best, as long as they are cheap; the mozzarella they choose is too often of poor quality, lacking in moisture. They don’t bother to give the dough time enough to ferment properly, settling for a mediocre crust.

Pizza deserves respect and admiration—for everything about it, but especially the bread, the crust. As a former art student who turned to baking, I see a pizza crust as a canvas, an invitation to paint and sculpt with food. I hope that doesn’t sound too pretentious; pizza is after all a peasant food, but a glorious peasant food when someone approaches it with care and affection, taking bread and building it into a beautiful whole meal.

As much carping as I’ve just done about Naples, I have to say it is pizza paradise compared to the United States. If you choose carefully, you *can* find great pizza in Naples. Back home, however, I want to weep when I think how industrialized (with a few exceptions) this simple food has become. Many Americans grow up with the notion that real pizza is the stuff they box at Pizza Hut or Domino’s—pizza for which the greatest objective seems to be how fast a truck can get it to one’s door. Or it’s a notion formed by the so-called pizza parlor. Isn’t a “parlor” supposed to suggest a pleasant place where bright people gather to talk, enjoy each other’s company, share ideas? A beauty parlor offers more creativity than your average American pizza parlor, a garish, harried place where floppy pies made from trashy ingredients are turned out over and over again—until customers are persuaded that this

experience is somehow a good thing.

I've been fortunate enough to find and learn from the genuine article in many places. In Naples, when you manage to squeeze past all the bad stuff, there is Da Michele, a nondescript yet renowned and worshipped place that seems to reserve all its skill for selecting the purest freshest ingredients and then assembling them basically, without pretension. I also learned from Chris Bianco, the award-winning chef at Pizzeria Bianco in Phoenix, who puts most boastful New Yorkers to shame, and from the inventive Andrew Feinberg at Franny's in Brooklyn. They are all wonderfully expert in their personal ways, and the education they shared with me helped put me on the path to making pizza my way.

I came to pizza baking slowly. First, I was a bread baker. And in some ways bread saved my life. It fulfilled so many needs, gave me purpose, allowed me to indulge a talent that I must have had in me all along. I opened Sullivan Street Bakery in New York City's SoHo neighborhood in 1994; in the fall of 2000, we moved the bakery to a larger location in Hell's Kitchen. As I struggled through my early mornings, year after year, I was always learning and inventing. Along the way, I developed my no-knead home-kitchen process for dough that, once risen, is cooked in a preheated pot in the oven; the pot acts as an oven within an oven, creating a dark, rustic crust while at the same time keeping the crumb moist. A little yeast and extended fermentation strengthen the dough, eliminating the kneading step that's supposed to do the same thing. It's a method that ultimately brought me widespread recognition—in large part thanks to Mark Bittman's article about it in the *New York Times*, a piece that, on the wings of the Internet, flew around the world so fast and so far that even Mark was startled. That was in 2006.

But, earlier, soon after September 11, I got the idea that I'd like to do something to cheer people up. On New Year's Day, while gloom still gripped the city, I decided to act on it: I threw a pizza party at the bakery. I made pizzas that were round, charred at the edge, and relatively firm on the bottom (I don't like soft crusts with the toppings sliding off). It was too soon to think about using my no-knead dough, an approach that hadn't advanced far enough yet. That would come later (and is now in fact the foundation of my crusts). I invited friends, chefs, and customers. And the party caught on. I threw that party every New Year's for four years.

I was a baker, not a chef, and yet ... I got it in my head that I wanted to be able to show off a bit more of my cooking skills beyond bread making—as much as I do revere it. So I persuaded a friend who had a pizza truck to go with me to Union Square, the great farmer's market in the city. The pizzas I made there—and gave away free, which admittedly is always a surefire approach—were simple: the Rosa, a Margherita, and the spinach pizza I call a Popeye, all of which you'll see in this book. The hungry natives lined up five deep. I also gave away T-shirts that shouted "Viva Hell's Kitchen" to announce the bakery's new address.

As for the pizza, I knew at that moment, as I feverishly turned out one pizza after another that I could really pull this thing off for a whole lot of people. And the idea of a restaurant—an exceptional, inventive restaurant that would break the mold of the commonplace New York pizzeria—was more powerful than ever in my mind. I remember the date clearly. It was November 1, a soft Indian summer day; seven days later Mark's piece on my no-knead bread ran in the *Times*. The glow of that article was definitely helpful when it came time to create a restaurant. Everything was coming together.



As I approached my new Manhattan pizza place, Co. (for company), which would open in early 2009, I became obsessed with pizza. I kept thinking about the whole spectrum of Italian combinations of sauces, meats, and cheeses, many of them most familiar as dressings for pasta, and transformed them into novel pizza pies.

In the past, for the most part, the few pizzas I made to sell at my bakery next to the loaves were rectangular pizzas in the Roman style. They especially worked well for a retail store, where they might have to sit around awhile. A beautiful aspect of these relatively thick pies is that they are durable—snacks designed to be eaten hot or at room temperature or even the next day. But with the restaurant, I was drawn to the best of the thinner, crisper, disk-shaped pies of Naples, the ones that are so seductive hot and fresh from the oven. There is a touch of the spiritual in that disk; it's an unforced, natural shape that reminds me of a pool of rainwater, of da Vinci's man of perfect proportions, or of the mandala, a symbol of harmony and spirituality. And these round pies are elegant besides—the toppings carefully placed, with a charred, blistered rim forming a dramatic, stark frame for the ingredients.

I should pause for a second and say that although I've been describing the pies as round here, I don't mean a perfect circle. Each pizza is handmade and, as such, idiosyncratic. From a purely functional point of view, they are shaped to be easy to cut into wedges. But I suppose it would be more accurate to call them "roundish." When I see a cook laboring to perfect that shape, I see an individual who is perhaps too involved with the circle at the expense of the ingredients.

With this book, I expect you to be able to make pizzas at home every bit as attractive and alive with flavor as the ones I produce in the restaurant and my own home kitchen. The pies should look terrific and they should be fun—like the Bird's Nest Pie, which boasts shaved asparagus with cheese and quail eggs, or the Pepperoni Pie, which has no pepperoni sausage on it, but rather a red pepper puree with a topping of lamb sausage meat. I want you to see how fuss-free just a handful of familiar ingredients can be, and yet how transcendent, if selected and combined with skill. (That's the true miracle of genuine Italian cooking—elevating the ordinary to the extraordinary.) And, of course, while I'll teach you how to use very basic tomato sauce, I'll also demonstrate how to free yourself from that base with pizzas you may never have imagined before.

I hope you will engage in this adventure with high spirit, optimism, and anticipation. Don't be intimidated; making a pizza is not haute cuisine. It requires surprisingly little effort—remember, we'll be relying on my simple no-knead bread recipe for the crust—and, once the toppings have been prepared, just a few minutes of cooking. After you've mastered my home kitchen techniques (I broil rather than bake, for instance) and experienced the excitement of a deeply flavored, often innovative pizza, let your own creativity take flight. I hope you'll come up with pizzas—beautiful, simple constructions—you can call your own. I'll know I've done my job when you come to see pizza as healthy, artful, and so infinitely variable that you wouldn't mind eating a pizza pie just about every day, like I do!

To amplify that sense of variety, I've complemented the pizzas in this book with a selection of bright, often unusual salads, toasts, soups, and desserts—most of them directly off the menu at Co.—that can round out or extend a meal. They're going to be especially welcome when you're entertaining.

I feel so intensely about what I'm trying to do that I implore you to be in touch with me

directly, at my website, [theuniversityofbread.com](http://theuniversityofbread.com). Let me know how it's going. If anything confusing, tell me, and I'll do my best to clear it up. If you want to try something of your own invention but are unsure about the combination you have in mind, I'll give you an honest opinion. I'm really looking forward to this, our time together.



# EQUIPMENT

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I have the feeling that many home cooks think that making great, restaurant-quality pizza in a conventional kitchen is either impossible or involves too much special equipment. Not true. The few pieces of important equipment are easily available and relatively inexpensive. There is a bit of cleverness involved however: Just look at how I boost the surface temperature of my pizza stone during the preheating stage by baking it and then broiling it.

## THE BEAUTY OF STONE

First you'll need a pizza stone; these are inexpensive and readily available online and in kitchenware stores. I prefer a commercial one that is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick because it holds the heat better than thinner ones. But the most commonly available stones are  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick; I've developed these recipes on them and find they function well. These pizza stones are usually  $14 \times 16$ -inch rectangles, and this is excellent for a single pizza. They also have the advantage of being easier to handle than anything larger would be—and they fit into any oven. (You can even create your own pizza stone using kiln tile.) My heating method is to preheat the stone first on bake at  $500^{\circ}\text{F}$ , and then under the broiler, so the surface has climbed to well over  $600^{\circ}\text{F}$  by the time you call on it to do its work.

## THAT INDISPENSABLE PEEL

In addition to the stone, you'll find it's extremely useful to have a pizza peel (or paddle). It's an inexpensive, easy-to-find tool that helps enormously for getting the pies on and off the stone. In the recipes, I always tell you to flour the peel well so that the raw dough will slide easily (thanks to quick, jerking motions as you transfer it) from peel to stone. Peels come in a number of materials. Most of the time, I stick to the wooden model designed for the home, with a short handle that's only 8 or 10 inches long—not the huge tool the professionals use, and probably the one you have in mind. I also like to keep a large metal spatula nearby. It's helpful for rotating the pie if it's cooking unevenly or for transferring it from the stone to the peel if you're finding that awkward, though usually a quick thrust of the peel will do the trick. It's also handy for scraping any burnt crust off a well-used stone (the stone should be kept as clean as possible but not washed).

## THE BLADES FOR THE JOB

For slicing the pie into wedges, a pizza wheel is excellent. So is a large mezzaluna (the half-moon-shaped blade with a handle at either end); a sharp chef's knife works just fine, too.

In preparing the pizza toppings, there are times when you'll need to slice ingredients very thinly. A mandoline—the slide-shaped tool with a blade embedded in it—is best for this. The classic and expensive French version has pretty much given way throughout the world of cooking to the inexpensive Japanese models, which do a wonderful job. But you'll get by most of the time with a sharp knife or your food processor. Alternatively, turn to the underused slicing blade on the old-fashioned box grater, my favorite tool of all. There's

something wonderful about having an implement as basic and versatile as this in your hands. Generations have relied on it without complaint (except about the occasional skinned knuckle).

## MEASURING—THE VIRTUES OF A SCALE

Many of you already have a home kitchen scale, but many of you don't. If you're in the second group, I urge you to get one. They generally cost less than a decent pan and are available in every kitchenware shop—online, too, of course. I'm a big believer in weighing ingredients, using the metric system in almost every case, even for liquids—rather than the familiar ounces, tablespoons, cups, and other measurements known as the U.S. Customary System. Weighing is more accurate and—once you get the knack of doing it regularly—faster. But in case I haven't persuaded you, you'll find both sets of measurements for ingredients in this book. Although they often don't *exactly* equal each other (it's the nature of the systems) they're always very close.





# A REVERENCE FOR INGREDIENTS

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The best pizzas are made from simple yet impeccable ingredients, carefully put together. The dough is paramount, of course, but so are the toppings, in particular the cheeses, tomatoes, and olive oil.

## FLOUR WITHOUT FUSS

You may be wondering how picky you have to be in buying flour for the crust. All sorts of “pizza flours” inhabit the shelves of stores near you, and there is a lot of carrying on about the flour when people strike poses in a discourse about pizza. But you don’t need all these highly specialized flours. I get perfectly fine results using common bread flour or all-purpose flour and have no emphatic preference. In the recipes in this book, for simplicity’s sake, I specify all-purpose.

## OLIVE OIL WITH FUSS

As for olive oil, so prevalent in pizza making, I do want to carry on a bit. The first thing I’m concerned about is, of course, flavor. Olive oil is like wine or great bread—more complex than you might imagine, more layered. The best and freshest extra-virgin oil (that is, from the first pressing of the olives and not from what’s left behind after that step) should be smooth and a touch buttery. As you taste it by itself, the middle of the experience will be clean on the palate and fruity, and just at the end, the “finish,” there should be a sense of pepper, a bit of spice. The good oils are produced in many countries; Italy, Spain, and France come to mind first. But Australian oil can be fine and so can that of South Africa. My absolute favorite, however, is Chilean. Italy may have the richest olive oil culture; Chile has the highest standards.

Buying really good olive oil is a much trickier business than it seems. Sure, the label may say “E.V.O.” and it may say “Italian,” but you need to read the fine print. A lot of Italian olive oil is actually just blended and packaged in Italy. It could come from anywhere. Often contains oil that is old and cheap. Look to see if the label goes beyond the “imported from Italy” designation to be much more specific about the country, region, or farm where it was produced. It should be exclusively from a single reputable place. That’s a good indication of care and quality.

## THOSE ESSENTIAL CHEESES

The cheeses named throughout should always be of the highest quality. The role they play is so central to a great pizza you can’t afford to skimp. If it’s mozzarella, whether imported or domestic, make sure it’s fresh, and more—it should be creamy, slightly sour, and very wet, with a fleshy texture.

I always call for Parmigiano-Reggiano as the Parmesan cheese; you can also use Grana Padano, pretty much its equal. The other stuff that passes for Parmesan in supermarkets—no matter how convenient the packaging—is unspeakably inferior.

The pecorino fresco I call for in some recipes is the youngest of this sheep’s-milk cheese,

often aged for less than a month; it's softer and less salty than the cheeses aged significantly longer. It's available in many good cheese or Italian specialty stores (pecorino fresco is a staple in Tuscany) and, if those sources fail you, it can be readily ordered online. Also, don't worry if the pecorino is anywhere from one month to six months old. That's still young in my book and will be pleasing on a pie.

## **TOMATO PERFECTION**

Excellent tomatoes are—no surprise—the key to great tomato sauces. The citizens of Naples, when they do good work and resist the urge to stint, are glowingly proud of their tomatoes—San Marzano tomatoes, for the most part, grown on the plains south of Mount Vesuvius. Of course, I believe in using the best fresh tomatoes available, too. Depending on the season and where you live, they can come from Florida or the Hudson Valley or your own backyard. But if you're tempted to settle for distinctly inferior out-of-season fresh tomatoes, go for the canned instead, preferably from Italy.

With fresh tomatoes, one word to pay special attention to in the ingredient list for red sauce is *ripe*. By that I mean, among other qualities, completely red. A ripe tomato will peel much more easily than an underripe one. Also, be sure it has the sweet, slightly acidic flavor common to all great tomatoes. (I'm well aware that some tomatoes are designed not to be acidic, but that's not what we're talking about here.)

## **ANCHOVIES, PACKED WELL**

I am a fan of anchovies and they frequently show up in my recipes for pizzas and salads (although if you hate them you can, in some instances, leave them out). I always stipulate salt-packed anchovies, which are not what you see most often in the supermarket (those are packed in salted, sometimes rancid oil). The simply salt-packed ones are more flavorful and firmer, and they allow you to rely exclusively on your own very good extra-virgin olive oil when required by a recipe. They do involve a bit of extra work. You'll need to rinse off the salt, dry, and fillet them with a paring knife, removing the spine and innards. To find salt-packed anchovies you'll have to pay a visit to a specialty store or order them online. If all you've got on hand is the oil-packed ones, however, go ahead. They'll work, but you'll lose a certain subtlety.





# ADJUSTING FOR OVEN TYPE

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The recipes—including preheating and cooking times—were developed using a high-quality home gas oven with a broiler at the top of the primary compartment. But even if that’s the sort of oven you own, too, it could well vary from mine in the heat it produces during preheating and baking. As a practical matter, what this means is that cooking times are simply guidelines; some pies will take longer in your oven than specified and some less.

For a properly cooked pizza, keep the visual cues in mind and check: The pizza is finished when the surface is bubbling and the rim is deeply charred but not actually burnt. (Don’t worry about losing heat if you open the oven to peek in.) Try a simple pie first—one with few toppings—so you learn just how your own oven works before moving on to the more elaborate creations. And keep in mind that the last thing you want is toppings that are uncooked.

Whatever oven you’re using, the applicable technique should become second nature after one or two tries.

## ELECTRIC VARIATION

Many of you will be working with an electric oven, a slightly different experience from gas. The elements of the electric ones are generally designed to turn off when the oven reaches 500°F or 550°F and the door is closed—even if it’s the broiler doing the heating and not the baking element. When you completely understand how I use my gas broiler continuously to force the stone hotter on the surface and also to cook the pizza (door closed) so the crust chars properly and the toppings cook quickly, the electric’s shutdown feature may strike you as a potential problem. It’s easily solved. Thanks mostly to the tireless efforts of Amanda, our recipe tester (who also, while cooking every pizza in the book, devised some of the serving strategies that follow), we figured out how to overcome this bump in the road. It’s a relatively simple matter that requires some adjustments in the timing and procedure.

With electric ovens that turn off at 500°F or so, place the stone on a rack about 4 inches from the top heating element (not the 8 inches called for with gas) and preheat, on bake, at 500°F for the usual 30 minutes. Then, to boost the heat of the stone without the oven’s elements shutting down, open the oven door a few inches and leave it ajar for about 30 seconds. Some of the ambient heat will escape, but the stone will stay just as hot. Now close the oven door and switch to broil for 10 minutes to heat the surface to the maximum. Open the door and slide the pizza in to broil. Because the stone is so close to the element, you may need to pull the rack out a few inches to get the pie centered on the stone; do it quickly and don’t worry about losing too much heat. With the door closed, broil for roughly 2 minutes longer than specified for gas—until the crust is adequately charred but not burnt and the toppings are bubbling. Remember, it’s the visual cues that count most. Check a couple of times; the pizza will cook quickly. The broiler, in our testing, did in fact remain on for the entire cooking period using this method, and the pies turned out perfectly.

## **BOTTOM BROILER**

For those of you—many fewer these days than used to be the case—with a gas broiler in a bottom drawer of the oven, here's what to do: Start with the stone in the broiler at the lowest level or on the floor of the oven. Preheat on low for about 20 minutes, and then switch to high for another 5 minutes. Slide in the pizza, close the drawer, and broil as instructed by the recipe (most often 3½ to 4 minutes), until bubbling and properly charred—checking to be sure it's not burning.



## SERVING STRATEGIES

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If you have your dough ready and want to make a pie quickly, turn to the [No Sauce Pizzas](#) chapter for the quickest recipes. For many of these pies, particularly those with red or white sauce, you'll probably be happier if you make your tomato sauce or béchamel ahead. All the basic ingredient recipes are in the [Toppings](#) chapter or close to where they're called for. With the supporting cast already in the wings, the pizzas take just a few minutes to throw together and cook at showtime.

Each pizza, cut into four wedges, is meant to be one substantial portion. Since one stone will accommodate only a single pie—and it's very likely you'll be serving more than yourself—we've devised a number of strategies that work well for a group. The key is that the pies take only a few minutes each to cook.

For dinner for, say, four people, cook a single pizza, slice it, serve everybody a wedge, and then sit for a while to enjoy it yourself before returning to the kitchen to prepare another. To make the process more efficient, have several balls of floured dough waiting near your work area, covered with a damp cloth to prevent drying. Shape each one as needed, slip it onto a peel, top it, and cook. If you're hosting a dinner party, set out some of the toasts or salads on the table so there's always something to nibble on during the meal while the pizzas keep coming, a few minutes apart.

The most fun of all when you're serving a group is to have a kitchen party, if your kitchen is large enough to allow people to stand around comfortably or perch on stools at an island. Cook each pizza—to the inevitable oohs and ahs of guests who can't believe such fantastic-looking pizzas are coming out of your regular oven—and serve them right there. Let guests take turns assembling and cooking the pies. Actually, you should expect some to plead for a try. The pizza making becomes the party's entertainment.

If your oven is on the larger side and can accommodate two stones at once, side by side on the rack, you can prepare two pies at the same time. With two stones at work, you may decide to serve just half a pie to each of four diners, along with salads and toasts. It will be plenty. Depending on how practiced you become, it's possible to serve eight or even ten guests in a single evening, but more than that and you'll end up feeling like the frantic guy at the local pizzeria, which would defeat the purpose.

The temptation, of course, is to make several pies and hold off serving them until all are cooked; there's no crime in that—many of them will survive just fine—but I've been assuming you want to serve each pie fresh and hot.

**BEER AND WINE: A RELAXED POINT OF VIEW** Although I have my personal favorites, I'm usually reluctant to urge a pairing of a particular wine or beer with a pizza. But I do like to think in terms of just a few guiding principles.

The reason almost any good beer will go well has to do with its most fundamental



characteristics. The carbonation scrubs the palate and the beer's malt is a delicate echo of the malt emanating from the charred crust of the pie. But some assertive pizzas—like my [Brussels Sprouts and Chestnut Pie](#)—will especially benefit from a big, spicy beer. The Belgian style generally works well here. The sweeter, more delicate pies—such as [Onion Pie](#)—are enhanced by a beer that can't overwhelm them. A light lager or a mild ale usually comes to mind.

As for wine, it's pretty difficult to go wrong with anything that's decent. The whites, naturally, tend to go best with the milder pizzas, the reds with the heartier ones. But, in the end, my advice—with beer or wine—is to go with what you like.



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# PIZZA PIES

In the humdrum world of the formulaic pizza, tomato sauce seems to be nearly universal. Of course, tomato sauce is a good thing—no debating that. But it's not the *only* thing. If it were, it would limit what we could create—and for many pizza makers it does. Think about how unimaginative pasta would be if absolutely every dish had to start with tomato sauce instead of the alternative possibilities presented by olive oil, wine, or cream. So I classify my pizzas as based on red sauce (almost always a very basic tomato preparation), white sauce (the flour-milk-butter mixture known as a béchamel), or no sauce at all. If you start thinking with these options in mind, it sets free the creative cook inside your mind, and the possibilities are endless.





# THE PIZZA DOUGH FOUNDATION

I know how great the lure of dough from the grocery store must be, and I won't hate you if you turn to it out of lack of time or planning. (A pound of frozen dough should be enough for two pizzas.) But it will not give you the kind of crisp, beautiful, flavorful crust mine will; the moisture content will be different, the cooking time may be different, and so will the texture. (Also, beware of additives lurking in the stuff.) It will be decidedly inferior. And why turn to the premade when mine is so easy to make? Yes, my recipe does have to be started a day ahead, but then it just sits, on its own, until the next day when it is prepared and waiting for your creation.





# pizza dough

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**MAKES 4 BALLS OF DOUGH, ENOUGH FOR 4 PIZZAS** • While I'm not picky about the flour—either bread flour or all-purpose is fine—what does concern me is how the dough is handled. Treat it gently so the dough holds its character, its texture. When you get around to shaping the disk for a pie, go easy as you stretch it to allow it to retain a bit of bumpiness (I think of it as blistering), so not all of the gas is smashed out of the fermented dough. I prefer to hold off on shaping the ball until just before topping it. If it's going to sit for a while—more than a couple of minutes—cover it with a damp kitchen towel to prevent it from drying out.

I offer you two approaches for shaping. The simpler one, executed completely on the work surface, is slower than the second, where you lift the disk in the air and stretch it by rotating on your knuckles. Lifting it into the air to shape it is more fun, too.

500 grams (17½ ounces or about 3¾ cups) **all-purpose flour**, plus more for shaping the dough

1 gram (¼ teaspoon) **active dry yeast**

16 grams (2 teaspoons) **fine sea salt**

350 grams (1½ cups) **water**

- 1 In a medium bowl, thoroughly blend the flour, yeast, and salt. Add the water and, with a wooden spoon or your hands, mix thoroughly.
- 2 Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a kitchen towel and allow it to rise at room temperature (about 72°F) for 18 hours or until it has more than doubled. It will take longer in a chilly room and less time in a very warm one.
- 3 Flour a work surface and scrape out the dough. Divide it into 4 equal parts and shape them. For each portion, start with the right side of the dough and pull it toward the center; then do the same with the left, then the top, then the bottom. (The order doesn't actually matter; what you want is four folds.) Shape each portion into a round and turn seam side down. Mold the dough into a neat circular mound. The mounds should not be sticky; if they are, dust with more flour.
- 4 If you don't intend to use the dough right away, wrap the balls individually in plastic and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Return to room temperature by leaving them out on the counter, covered in a damp cloth, for 2 to 3 hours before needed.

**NOTE** Don't freeze the dough, but you can store it in the refrigerator, wrapped in plastic, for up to three days. In effect, when you're set to use it, you have your own ready-made dough.

- [Thinking in an Emergency \(Norton Global Ethics Series\) online](#)
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