

Pizza

Pizza is also a basic flatbread made with olive oil dough which is knocked back to roll out or hand shaped into a disc and baked with a topping or 'bianca' with fresh topping added after the bread is baked. My basic dough recipe is for 600g of flour which makes four 30cm diameter pizza weighing 250g each. Being a regular bakers Squisito use fresh baker's yeast which weighs heavier than dried yeast so halve the weight if using dried yeast.



The recipe below is set out in baker's percentages so the amount of flour is always 100% since all other ingredients are proportional. This means that if you change the weight of flour in the table below it recalculates all the other ingredients.

Pizza	Grammes	Baker's %
0 or 00 flour	600.0	100%
fresh yeast	13.2	2.20%
salt	12.0	2.00%
water	360.0	60%
olive oil	30.0	5%
Gross Weight	1015.2	169%
Dry Mix Weight	625.2	104.2%
Liquid weight	390	61.6%
Makes	4	

Always weigh your yeast *and* water since anything else is not accurate enough and be accurate to 1 gramme with yeast and salt (known here as 'Alex's OCD rule!'). We use Molino Spadoni 0 or 00 flour or Shipton Mill Ciabatta flour or Whissingdene 'strong flour' - that means high gluten which in most cases means Canadian flour from the plains of Manitoba or Altamura in

Puglia. Shipton Mill will deliver or you can buy bags or sacks from Squisito without the delivery cost. You can mix Italian 00 flour or Altamura flour for better results once you have got the basics right then experiment by adding 10-20% starter or *biga* for more flavour. Biga is best (!) because the fermentation process is slow and it adds to the flavour. We use biga most of the time but for now we'll keep it simple.

Timing is everything because baking is about feeding yeast which creates gas and rises the bread. This in turn governs texture and flavour which is what makes real bread different. Mess up your timing in the oven is as fatal as over proving your dough.

Once you have a basic baking kit (and I do mean basic) the rest is easy. Get it right once then you can move on to improving your baking.

Basic kit consists of a 12" to 18" stainless bowl (or two or three) to mix which you can buy from Poundland or IKEA (bigger is definitely better), a scraper (TK Maxx) get one that is small and plastic (shaped like the lens of Rayban sunglasses suits most bowls best) and a sharp flat edged one for scraping your worktop clean (my favourite is a £2.99 from TK Maxx), electronic scales which takes up to 5kg in 1g increments (about £12.99) and a couple of plastic jugs from Poundland again and ideally a 50p wooden pastry brush to brush on olive oil.

Buy an oven thermometer (not a meat one) so you know where to find 200°C (fan assisted) and 220°C (convection) in your oven - once you know where 220 is on your dial you can leave it in the cupboard until you have to bake at a friends house!

You do not need a mixer since mixing 5kg by hand is quicker than washing up a breadmaker bowl or mixer bowl. Morrisons sell usable non-stick baking trays at 2 for £2.99 although you can use Teflon non stick baking sheets which are neat if you like using a paddle and baking stone (see below). If you have a breadmaker with a dough program you can use that to do the mixing and first prove.

If you want a paddle to slide your bread in and out get a couple of bits of thin plywood about 6 inches wide x 18-24 long and dust them with flour before putting your bread on to slide onto your baking sheet/stone in the oven. For best results use a baking stone and slide your foccacia in direct onto that.

If you haven't got a baking stone go to Topps 's Tiles and buy a nice thick porcelain tile about 30cm x 30cm or 30 x 40cm according to the size of your oven. Thicker the better since a tile will absorb heat as the oven warms up and the tile will give your bread or baking tray a good thermal impact which will make your bread rise nicely (most important with most other breads). I use a ¾ in thick *Terra Rosso* tile from Topps Tiles in my Rayburn and 1½ in thick refractory bricks cut to size in my pizza oven You can get poncy baking stones on eBay or / www.3-2-1-pizza.co.uk/ for £50 or more but that is a luxury and more of a Christmas list item than an essential.

Anyway, here we go. Use fresh yeast from Squisito and freeze what you don't use. If you have to use dried then you need about 50% the amount of fresh yeast dissolved in a spoon of the water and set to warm at room temperature for half an hour. Fresh yeast is where it is at so try it then compare with dried.

Begin by weighing your ingredients separately. Put flour in bowl and salt to one side. Do not sieve flour. Then crumble yeast into tepid water and mix with a spoon. Add olive oil - 30 or 40g does fine - no need to be 100% accurate with olive oil. Tip water into bowl and mix in with flour, turning the bowl with one hand and pushing the flour with the other. It'll be messy to start with but in a minute or so you will find it gets a bit stringy and there's not much loose flour in the bowl. At this point tip the flour onto your work surface.



Next scrape the flour into one place with the metal scraper then pick up the dough in a lump and throw it down onto worktop with a slap. Pickup, turn 90 degrees and repeat a few times. After a few slaps flick the dough down each time so the back of the ball nearest you flips over the front, trapping air under it as it goes - a bit like throwing a yo-yo. After 5 minutes of this the dough will start to ball because you are developing the [gluten](#) in the bread. Have a quick scrape up of the work surface and your hands, scraping the dough into the dough ball. Don't rub off the dough from your hands as you will transfer the dirt in your pores into the bread - you can wash your hands later when you wash the bowl.

Now your objective is to get your dough to form a ball with a skin like a baby's bum. Keep banging and slapping the dough until it starts to smooth. At this point you can add 'skin' by chasing the dough about the worktop by pushing it with the back of your thumb as you hold and scoop the dough with your metal scraper. It's hard to describe but imagine you are holding a fishing rod and swinging it from right to left whilst keeping the back of your hand on the worktop whilst sliding a playing card under the dough ball. With a little practice you will find that a few pushes develops the skin nicely. If you still get dimples then give it a couple of slaps and repeat.

When you have a smoothish ball with gluten strands showing on the surface like an athlete's biceps, cup the dough like washing your face with water, and plop it into the bowl which by now you have scraped clean and rubbed with a splash of olive oil (I use an old balsamic glaze or tomato ketchup squeeze bottle myself). Cover with a teatowel until doubled (in Italy it is common to make bread in the morning and prove the bread under your bed covers to take advantage of the warmth you left in the bed!) which takes 40 to 60 minutes. Be sure to keep your proving dough away from draughts or changes in temperature.



Next preheat your oven to 240°C (bearing in mind it will drop 20°C every time you open the door) and position your baking stone or top rack about 60% the way up the oven (suits most ovens - try moving up and down with subsequent focaccia to test it). If you want you can put one baking tile above one a couple of inches below and slide your pizza on the lower stone for better *thermal impact* when it comes to baking later - this is what makes a pizza oven work.

When your dough has roughly doubled in size peel turn it out of the bowl with your plastic scraper and flop it on a worktop dusted with a few pinches of flour. Shape your dough into a squarish lump and divide into 250g lumps on your scales and gently cup into discs or balls. If you are a few grammes under add a little bit of dough and tuck it under the dough lump then fold into a ball.

Next, take the first ball and dust the top with flour, then push down with the flat of your hand then push the corners square with the tips of your fingers if you are using a square baking tray or roll into a disk. You can now use a plain wood rolling pin or sawnoff broomstick (known as a *matarello* in Italy) to get your dough roughly bread tin shaped or just use your fingers to push it out to size and shape like expanding an image on an iPhone. The technique with a rolling pin is to gently shape the dough into a rough round about 15mm thick in one direction, turn it through 90 degrees then repeat by using the palm of your hand on the centre of the rolling pin and rolling it between the palm of your hand and your wrist (rather than using your fingers on the edge). This keeps some air in the dough so it will rise at the edges and an even shape so the topping cooks evenly. To see world champion pizzaiolo Antoine de Fazio shaping and topping [click here](#).

At this point you have the choice of putting your pizza on a peel to slide it onto your baking stone or putting it on a baking tray and baking in that. Generally, sliding your pizza directly onto the baking stone works best and to do so just dust your peel (which can be a bit of plywood or a baking sheet).

To make a basic *passata* I use a tin of plain Marzano plum tomatoes and blend using a hand blender together with a splash of olive oil, a pinch of salt and oregano and a clove of garlic. At a push just zap a tin of tomatoes. Our jars of Puglian cherry tomato passata are particularly nice and very convenient and every bit as good as homemade.

The secret to get best results is not to load up your pizza with topping but be sparing since a good pizza is all about the bread. So, put a tablespoon or two of passata on your dough and use the base of the spoon to move it about towards the edge. If it's perfectly even your pizza won't be as exciting as one that has a bit thicker and thinner bits of topping. Next peel your mozzarella into 50mm strips like peeling a boiled egg and decorate randomly then add a sprinkle of oregano to make a Pizza Margherita.

To make a full *pizza Napoli* add a few black olives and a few anchovies (one of my favourites). Alternatively, you can go for a *Quattro Formaggi* by using a bit of Gorgonzola, Taleggio and Pecorino or Squisito things up with a bit of *Tuscan* or *Napoli* sausage or blobs of *Calabrian 'nduja*. There's no end to what you can top with so don't dismiss a *pizza bianca* without tomatoes but decked with fresh rocket, pared *Grana Padano* or *fresh ricotta* and fresh tomatoes or *Parma Ham*. See below a Squisito pizza night menu for ideas.



ANTI PASTI

Squisito Anti pasti selection - veggie or meat £4.50
Caprese Salad mozzarella, tomatoes, basil, olive oil, pepper & smoked sea salt £3.50 **Melon & Parma Ham** £3.50 **Mixed Italian Olives** £2.50 **Taralli Breadsticks** £1.50 **Garlic Doughballs** £2.50

PIZZE

Margherita tomato, mozzarella & oregano £6.00
Funghi tomato, mozzarella & mushrooms £6.00
Squisito tomato & mozzarella topped with fresh tomato, rocket, Parmesan & prosciutto £8.00
Salsiccia tomato, mozzarella & Squisito artisan sausage £7.00
Calabrian tomato, mozzarella & HOT Spianata salami £7.00
Quattro Formaggi tomato, mozzarella, gorgonzola, pecorino & Taleggio cheeses £7.00
Vegetariana tomato, mozzarella, mixed roasted peppers, red onion, courgette & balsamic glaze £7.00
Pescatora tomato, mozzarella, mixed seafood & herbs £7.00
Atomica tomato, mozzarella, piquillo peppers & anchovy £7.00
Napoletana tomato, mozzarella, capers, anchovies & black olives with a pinch of oregano £7.00
Capra tomato, mozzarella, goat's cheese & caramelised garlic £7.00
Zucca tomato, mozzarella, roasted squash & sage £7.00

NEW

Extra Toppings 50p each

DOLCI É CAFFE

Caffé al Affogato vanilla ice cream topped with espresso £3.00
Tiramisu Traditional Venetian dessert of mascarpone, espresso & Marsala rum topped with cocoa £3.00
Coffee - Espresso £1.00, **Double Espresso** £1.50 **Cappuccino** £1.50, **Machiato** £1.50, **Latté** £2.00 **Corretto** £3.00
Grappa £3.00 **Amaretto** £3.00 **Cynar** £3.00 **Mulled Wine** £3.00

BAR

Menabrea Lager 330ml £2.20 **Tunnel Brewery Lager** 330ml £2.20
Tunnel Brewery IPA 500ml £2.20 **Primitivo Red** Puglia 70cl £9.50
Chianti DOCG Tuscany 70cl £9.50 **Lambrusco Rosso** Umbria 70cl £5.50
Lambrusco Bianco Umbria 70cl £5.50 **Orvieto White** Lazio 70cl £8.00
Grillo White Sicilia 70cl £10.50 **Pinot Grigio Rosé** Veneto 70cl £7.50
Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Veneto 70cl £15.00 **Soft Drinks & Water** £1.00

Call Sara on **07824 314 235** or go to **www.squisito-deli.co.uk**