

Simple Sourdough Pizza Crust



4.8 from 100 reviews

author: [Alexandra Stafford](#) prep time: 24 hours

cook time: 5 to 6 minutes total time: 1 day + 1 hour yield: 4 pizzas



DESCRIPTION

What you need to make this recipe...:

...**a sourdough starter**. Here are three sources:

- [Breadtopia](#)
- [King Arthur Flour](#)
- [Cultures for Health](#)

...**time**. Once your starter is ready to go, this recipe requires an initial 6 – 18 hour rise, followed by at least 6 hours in the fridge or up to 3 days.

Timing/Schedule:

The more I make sourdough, the more I realize that the timing of each bake depends so much on the time of year and the temperature of my kitchen. In the summer, because it is warm and humid, the first rise (bulk fermentation) of all my sourdoughs takes between 6 – 8 hours; in the winter the first rise takes 12 – 18 hours.

It is best to rely on visual cues. For the bulk fermentation, you want the dough to double (or less than double: I now end my bulk fermentation when the dough has risen by 50% in volume). This is why I cannot recommend using **a straight-sided vessel** (as opposed to a bowl) enough. It makes gauging the first rise easier.

If at any point you are worried the dough will over-ferment – say, for example, the bulk fermentation is nearly complete but you are tired and want to go to bed – **stick the vessel in the fridge and pick up the process in the morning**. (Note: If your dough rises above double, don't despair ... my dough has tripled in volume during an overnight rise, and the resulting dough still had plenty of oven strength and spring.)

Schedule: I like mixing this dough in the evening, performing 4 stretch and folds before I go to bed (if time

permits), then letting the dough complete its bulk fermentation at room temperature (68°F) overnight or in the refrigerator (especially in the summer, when my kitchen is much warmer). In the morning, it's typically ready to be portioned (if it rose at room temperature), transferred to quart containers, and stashed in the fridge. If I had let my dough spend time in the fridge for the bulk fermentation, I remove it in the morning, and let it complete its bulk fermentation at room temperature. Once complete, I portion the dough and stash it in the fridge. Sometimes I'll use the dough that same evening; sometimes I'll use it the following day or the next. I encourage using the dough within 3 days.

In short: **If you want pizza for the weekend, mix your dough on either Wednesday or Thursday.**

Troubleshooting: If you have issues with your dough being too sticky, please read this post: [Why is my sourdough so sticky? The 4 common mistakes.](#)

Flour choice:

Due to supply issues, I've been making this recipe with all-purpose flour, and it works beautifully. You absolutely can use bread flour or [tipo 00 flour](#) if you can get your hands on either. If you can't, know that all-purpose (unbleached) flour works great here. If you use 00 flour, you'll likely need to reduce the amount of water. I would start with 350 g, and adjust moving forward based on your results.

Favorite Pizza-Making Tools:

Baking Steel

Pizza Peel

Parchment Paper: I bake my pizzas on parchment paper on my Baking Steel. Parchment allows for easy transfer from peel to steel.

Cast Iron Skillet: If you do not have a Steel or stone, you can use a cast iron skillet. Rub a half teaspoon of oil over its surface, transfer a stretched dough round to the skillet. Top as desired. Bake at 450°F for about 15 minutes.

Quart Containers for storing dough

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE DOUGH:

375 g water

100 g sourdough starter

10 g salt

500 g all-purpose or bread flour

FOR EACH MARGHERITA PIZZA:

2 tablespoons tomato sauce
1 to 2 oz mozzarella
handful of grated Parmigiano Reggiano (less than an ounce)
drizzle olive oil
pinch sea salt

FOR EACH KALE AND CRÈME FRAICHE PIZZA:

extra-virgin olive oil
a couple handfuls of baby or Tuscan kale
1 to 2 cloves garlic
Sea salt, such as Maldon
2 tablespoons crème fraîche
grated Parmigiano Reggiano, about 1/4 to 1/3 cup

FOR EACH NAKED PIZZA WITH RAMP OR SCALLION OIL:

1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup minced scallions or ramps
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 to 2 tablespoons crème fraîche
handful grated Parmigiano Reggiano
sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 **Mix the dough.** Place the starter, salt, and water in a large bowl. Stir with a spatula to combine – it doesn't have to be uniformly mixed. Add the flour. Mix again until the flour is completely incorporated. Transfer to a straight-sided vessel (if you have one.) Cover vessel with tea towel or cloth bowl cover and let stand 30 minutes.
- 2 **Stretch and fold:** after 30 minutes have passed, reach into the vessel and pull the dough up and into the center. Turn the vessel quarter turns and continue this pulling 8 to 10 times. **See video for guidance.** Let the dough rest for another 30 minutes; then repeat the stretching and folding. If

possible, repeat this cycle twice more for a total of 4 stretch and folds. By the 4th cycle, you will notice a huge difference in the texture of the dough: it will be smoother, stronger, and more elastic.

- 3 **Bulk fermentation:** Cover vessel with a tea towel or **bowl cover** and set aside to rise at room temperature (70°F/21°C) for 4 to 18 hours (the time will vary depending on the time of year, the strength of your starter, and the temperature of your kitchen; see notes above) or until the dough has roughly doubled in volume. (**UPDATE:** In the past I have recommended letting the dough rise until it doubles in volume. If you've had success with this, continue to let the dough double. Recently, I have been stopping the bulk fermentation when the dough increases by 50% in volume, and I feel my dough is even stronger in the end.) **Note:** *Do not use your oven with the light on for the bulk fermentation – it is too warm for the dough. When determining when the bulk fermentation is done, it is best to rely on visual cues (doubling in volume) as opposed to time. A straight-sided vessel makes monitoring the bulk fermentation especially easy because it allows you to see when your dough has truly doubled.*
- 4 **Portion and shape:** Turn the dough out onto a work surface and shape into a rough ball, using as much flour as needed – the dough will be sticky. Using a bench scraper, divide the dough into 4 equal portions. Sprinkle portions with flour. With floured hands, roll each portion into a ball, using the pinkie-edges of your hands to pinch the dough underneath each ball. Transfer each round of dough to a plastic quart container, cover, and store in fridge for at least 6 hours or up to 3 days or transfer to the freezer for up to 3 months (see notes in post about thawing).
- 5 **Make the pizzas:** Pull out a round (or more) of dough from the fridge one hour before you plan on baking. Dust dough with flour and place on a floured work surface. Let sit untouched for about an hour (a little longer or shorter is fine). Place a Baking Steel or pizza stone in the top third of your oven. Set oven to 550°F. Heat oven for at least 45 minutes but ideally 1 hour prior to baking.
- 6 **Shape the dough:** Gently shape dough into a 10-inch (roughly) round handling it as minimally as possible. (**See video for guidance.**) Lay a sheet of parchment paper on top of a pizza peel. Transfer the dough round to the parchment-lined peel.

Top and Bake

To make a classic Margherita-style pizza: Spread 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce over the surface of the dough. Top with mozzarella to taste. Sprinkle with parmesan to taste. Drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle lightly with sea salt. Shimmy the pizza, parchment paper and all into the oven. Bake pizza until top is blistered, about 5-6 minutes. Transfer to cutting board. Sprinkle with basil, if you have it. Cut and serve. Discard parchment paper.

To make a kale and crème fraîche pizza: Place the kale in a small bowl, drizzle with olive oil, season with sea salt, and toss. Spoon crème fraîche over the dough leaving a 1/2-inch border or so—

use about a tablespoon per pizza. Sprinkle with minced garlic and a handful of grated Parmigiano Reggiano. Top with the kale. Shimmy the pizza, parchment paper and all into the oven. Bake pizza until top is blistered, about 5 - 6 minutes. Transfer to cutting board. Cut and serve. Discard parchment paper.

To make a naked pizza with scallion oil: Heat 1/4 cup olive oil in a skillet with 1/4 cup of minced scallions (or ramps!) and 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes. Keep it over low heat while you make the pizza. Spoon crème fraîche over the dough leaving a 1/2-inch border or so—I use about a tablespoon per pizza. Sprinkle with a handful of grated parmesan. Shimmy the pizza, parchment paper and all into the oven. Bake pizza until top is blistered, about 5 - 6 minutes. Transfer to cutting board. At this point, the scallions should be starting to “frizzle”. If they aren’t, crank up the heat until the oil is sizzling. Spoon a few tablespoons of the hot oil over the pizza (you’ll have extra oil). Sprinkle with a pinch of sea salt. Cut and serve.



Category: Pizza



Method: Oven



Cuisine: American, Italian

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