

deep-dish pizza

makes two 9-inch pizzas

rising time 1½ to 2½ hours

baking time 20 minutes

total time 3 to 4 hours

key equipment stand mixer, medium saucepan, rolling pin, two 9-inch round cake pans

why this recipe works If you're from the Northeast, or if you haven't been to Chicago, you may dismiss deep-dish pizza out of regional pride. That would be a mistake. Real Chicago-style pizza is certainly thick, but its texture and flavor are something special: Instead of being bread-like, the crust offers the contrast of a good biscuit—airy inside, lightly crisp outside, and flaky throughout—and boasts a rich taste that holds its own under any topping. We wanted to achieve such results at home. Deep-dish pizza crust includes a fair amount of fat. Some recipes rely on oil, but we thought the rich flavor of butter was unbeatable in this crust. We found cornmeal in just about every ingredient list we reviewed, and it indeed added good earthy flavor and crunch. To achieve maximum flakiness, after mixing the dough and letting it rise, we employed a technique called laminating, which involves layering butter and dough through a sequence of rolling and folding to create ultraflaky pastries. Adding melted butter to the pizza dough and spreading the rolled-out dough with softened butter before folding did the trick in our crust. Moving the dough into the refrigerator for its second rise ensured that the butter remained in distinct layers and didn't get too soft. For the finishing touch on our crust, we oiled our cake pans, which made the crust crisp and even more flavorful. Following Chicago tradition, we covered the dough with shredded mozzarella before topping it with a thick tomato sauce. The cheese formed a barrier between the crust and the sauce, which prevented sogginess. A sprinkle of nutty Parmesan over the sauce provided a second layer of cheesy bite. We do not recommend mixing this dough by hand. Use the large holes of a box grater to grate the onion.

dough

3¼ cups (16¼ ounces) all-purpose flour

½ cup (2½ ounces) cornmeal

2¼ teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast

1½ teaspoons salt

1¼ cups (10 ounces) water, room temperature

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted,
plus 4 tablespoons (2 ounces) softened

2 teaspoons sugar

¼ cup (1¾ ounces) extra-virgin olive oil

sauce and toppings

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ cup grated onion

¼ teaspoon dried oregano

Salt and pepper

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes

¼ teaspoon sugar

2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

1 pound whole-milk mozzarella cheese,
shredded (4 cups)

¼ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

continued





deep-dish pizza, continued

1 For the dough Whisk flour, cornmeal, yeast, and salt together in bowl of stand mixer. Whisk water, melted butter, and sugar in 4-cup liquid measuring cup until sugar has dissolved. Using dough hook on low speed, slowly add water mixture to flour mixture and mix until cohesive dough starts to form and no dry flour remains, about 2 minutes, scraping down bowl as needed. Increase speed to medium-low and knead until dough is smooth and elastic and clears sides of bowl, about 8 minutes.

2 Transfer dough to lightly floured counter and knead by hand to form smooth, round ball, about 30 seconds. Place dough seam side down in lightly greased large bowl or container, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let rise until doubled in size, 1 to 1½ hours. (Unrisen dough can be refrigerated for at least 8 hours or up to 16 hours; let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before shaping in step 4.)

3 For the sauce and toppings Heat 2 tablespoons oil in medium saucepan over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion, oregano, and ½ teaspoon salt and cook until onion is softened and lightly browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes and sugar, bring to simmer, and cook until sauce measures 2½ cups, 25 to 30 minutes. Off heat, stir in basil and remaining oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to bowl and let cool completely before using.

4 Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Press down on dough to deflate and transfer to clean counter. Press and roll dough into 15 by 12-inch rectangle, with short side parallel to counter edge. Spread softened butter over dough, leaving ½-inch border along edges.

5 Roll dough away from you into firm cylinder, keeping roll taut by tucking it under itself as you go. With seam side down, flatten cylinder into 18 by 4-inch rectangle. Cut rectangle in half crosswise.

6 Working with 1 half at a time, fold dough into thirds like business letter, then pinch seams together to form rough ball. Return dough balls seam side down to greased bowl, cover tightly with plastic, and let rise in refrigerator until nearly doubled in size, 30 minutes to 1 hour.

7 Coat two 9-inch round cake pans with 2 tablespoons oil each. Press and roll 1 dough ball into 13-inch round of even thickness, sprinkling dough and counter with flour as needed to prevent sticking. Loosely roll dough around rolling pin and gently unroll it into prepared pan. Gently press dough into pan, working it into corners and 1 inch up sides. (If dough resists stretching, let it relax for 5 to 10 minutes before trying to stretch it again.) Repeat with remaining dough ball.

8 For each pizza, sprinkle 2 cups mozzarella evenly over surface of dough, spread 1¼ cups tomato sauce over cheese, and sprinkle 2 tablespoons Parmesan over sauce. Bake pizzas until crusts are golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes. Let pizzas cool in pans for 10 minutes, then transfer to cutting board with metal spatula. Slice and serve.

variation deep-dish pizza with sausage

Cook 1 pound hot or sweet Italian sausage, casings removed, in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, breaking it into ½-inch pieces with wooden spoon, until browned, about 5 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer sausage to paper towel-lined plate. Sprinkle half of cooked sausage over mozzarella in each pizza before continuing with additional toppings in step 8.