

Perfect Pizza Crust

1/2 cup warm water (about 110°)
1 envelope (2 1/4 tsp) instant yeast
1 1/4 cups water, at room temperature
2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
4 cups (22 oz) bread flour, plus more for dusting
1 1/2 tsp. salt
olive oil or non-stick cooking spray for greasing the bowl
olive oil for brushing crust (optional)
garlic salt for brushing crust (optional)

Using a 2-cup liquid measuring cup, measure the warm water and sprinkle in the yeast, stir immediately. After the yeast dissolves and swells, about 5-10 minutes, stir in the room temperature water and the oil.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, pour in the measured flour and salt. Briefly mix at low speed, using the paddle attachment. Continuing to mix at low speed, add the liquid ingredients slowly. Once the dough is formed, stop the mixer and attach the dough hook. Knead until the dough is smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. (The dough will be wet and sticky.) Brush the inside of a large bowl with olive oil. With floured hands, form the dough into a ball, and place in the oiled bowl. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Let rise in a warm, draft free area until doubled in size, about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Punch down the dough to deflate it.

To bake, place a pizza stone in the lower third of the oven. Heat the oven to 500° for at least 30 minutes. Meanwhile, turn the dough out onto a floured surface. Sprinkle with a little flour and divide into two equal pieces. Shape into two smooth, round balls. Cover with a clean, damp cloth and let rise for at least 10 minutes, but do not exceed 30 minutes.

With floured hands, shape one piece of dough and transfer to a pizza peel or parchment paper heavily dusted with semolina or cornmeal. Keep the other ball of dough covered. Brush with olive oil and sprinkle on garlic salt (both optional). Cover with desired toppings, then carefully slide the dough onto the pizza stone. Bake until the crust edges are golden brown and cheese is melted, about 8 to 12 minutes. Repeat with remaining dough or freeze for later use.

Source: Adapted from [Annie's Eats](#), originally from [Baking Illustrated](#)