

HANDBOOK



Detroit-style pizza gets its caramelized crust from cheese that goes all the way to the edges of the pan (p. 33).

THE TECHNIQUE

A Square Meal The secret to making crispy, chewy, cheesy Detroit-style pizza at home

DETROIT-STYLE PIZZA

BAKED IN A RECTANGULAR steel pan, with a bottom layer of melted cheese that goes all the way to the edges of its caramelized and crispy crust, Detroit-style pizza is a decidedly unique pizza style. Pepperoni is layered not just on top but also underneath the cheese. Stripes of tomato sauce top the whole affair. But my favorite thing about Detroit-style pizza is how forgiving it is. No matter your level of pizza-making experience, with the right ingredients and a little know-how, anyone can make this Motor City classic at home. It's an ideal, feeds-a-crowd dinner to balance out all of the holiday cooking around this time of year.

The crust uses a relatively high-hydration dough made with bread flour, which creates the optimal combination of sturdiness and tenderness. While old-school pizzerias in Detroit may ferment their dough for a day or two, this recipe calls for a simple two-hour rise. Next, the dough is stretched into a very well-greased rectangular metal pan before a quick second rise.

More is more when it comes to the toppings: A layer of pepperoni goes on first. Then comes the cheese. Unlike most other pizzas, which leave a border of untopped crust, Detroit-style pies take the cheese all the way to the edges of the pan, where it bakes into its characteristically crispy edge. Use Wisconsin brick cheese if you can find it—this semihard cow-milk cheese melts smoothly and caramelizes, creating toasty brown-butter flavors. (If you can't find brick cheese, substitute low-moisture mozzarella cheese.) Before baking, top the cheese with alternating stripes of tomato sauce and more pepperoni.

Finally, to mimic a professional pizza oven, cook the pizza by placing the pan on a baking steel set on a rack near the bottom of the oven. Your oven needs to be super hot, 500°F, to create that crispy crust, so give your steel plenty of time to heat up before you put the pizza in. Resist the urge to eat immediately (do the roof of your mouth a favor), and let it cool in the pan for a few minutes. Then cut it into squares, and savor. —ADAM DOLGE



1
MAKE THE DOUGH

Beat flour, water, yeast, and salt until a smooth, elastic, and slightly sticky dough forms. Let rise at room temperature until doubled in volume.



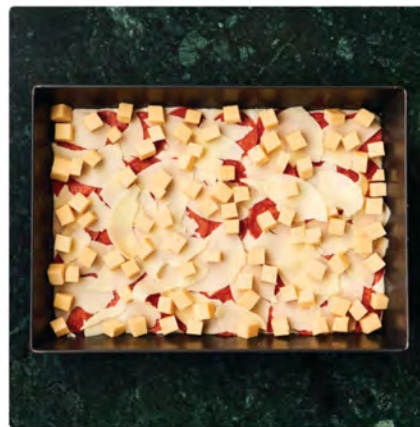
2
MAKE THE SAUCE

Cook garlic, dried rosemary, salt, and pepper in olive oil until fragrant. Add crushed tomatoes, and cook until reduced to about 1½ cups.



3
STRETCH DOUGH INTO PAN

Using your hands, stretch dough into a greased pan to evenly cover the bottom. If dough shrinks back, let it rest 5 minutes, and stretch again.



4
TOP WITH PEPPERONI AND CHEESE

Top dough evenly with half of the pepperoni. Sprinkle with brick cheese and provolone cheese, spreading all the way to the edges.




5
SPOON SAUCE OVER TOP

Spoon the tomato sauce in 3 horizontal lines (about ½ cup each) across top of pizza. Place remaining pepperoni between the stripes.



6
BAKE THE PIZZA

Bake pizza on a preheated baking steel on the lowest oven rack until edges are dark golden brown. Cool 5 minutes; remove pizza from pan.



Detroit-Style Pizza

ACTIVE 1 HR 10 MIN; TOTAL 3 HR 40 MIN
SERVES 8

Traditionally baked in blue-steel pans found in automotive shops, Detroit-style pizza is characterized by its square shape, airy crust, and stripes of tomato sauce. Unlike most pizzas that have a topping-free border, the key to this Midwestern classic is to sprinkle the cheese all the way to the edges of the pan—it caramelizes, creating a lacy, crisp crust.

2⅓ cups bread flour (about 9⅞ oz.), plus more as needed

1 cup warm water (105°F to 110°F)

1 tsp. instant or quick-rising yeast

3 tsp. kosher salt, divided

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for greasing

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 tsp. dried oregano

¼ tsp. black pepper

1 (14.5-oz.) can crushed tomatoes

5 oz. thinly sliced pepperoni (about 1½ cups), divided

8 oz. Wisconsin brick cheese (see Note) or low-moisture part-skim mozzarella cheese, cut into small cubes (about 1½ cups)

4 oz. thinly sliced provolone cheese, torn into small pieces (about 1 cup)

1. Beat flour, 1 cup warm water, yeast, and 2½ teaspoons salt in a stand mixer fitted with dough hook attachment on medium-low until dough is smooth, elastic, and slightly sticky, about 12 minutes. If needed, beat in additional flour, 1 tablespoon at a time, until dough pulls away from bowl.

2. Transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface. Shape into a ball, and place in a greased large bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, and let rise at room temperature until doubled in volume, about 2 hours.

3. Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons oil in a medium saucepan over medium. Add garlic, oregano, black pepper, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in crushed tomatoes, and bring to a simmer over medium-low; simmer, stirring often, until mixture is reduced to about 1½ cups, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat, and set aside until ready to use.

4. Preheat oven to 500°F with a baking steel or pizza stone on oven rack in the lowest position. Drizzle remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a 14- x 10-inch Detroit-style pizza pan (see “A Storied Slice,” below) or a 13- x 9-inch baking pan. Punch down dough, and transfer to pan. Using your hands, stretch dough to pan edges. (Let dough rest for 5 to 10 minutes if it shrinks back, and then stretch again.) Cover pan loosely with a clean kitchen towel; let rest at room temperature until dough is slightly airy and puffed, 30 to 45 minutes.

5. Uncover dough, and gently press down any large air bubbles. Top dough evenly with half of the pepperoni slices. Sprinkle with brick and provolone cheeses, spreading all the way to edges of pan. Spoon tomato sauce in 3 horizontal lines (about ½ cup each) across pizza. Top with remaining pepperoni slices in rows between sauce stripes.

6. Place pan on the preheated baking steel on oven rack in lowest position; bake pizza until cheese is bubbly, edges are dark golden brown, and pepperoni slices are crisp in spots, 14 to 18 minutes. Remove from oven.

7. Let pizza cool in pan for 5 minutes. Loosen pizza edges from pan using a

metal spatula. Remove pizza from pan, and transfer to a cutting board. Let cool for 5 minutes. Cut pizza into slices, and serve hot. —ADAM DOLGE

MAKE AHEAD Dough can be made through step 2 and refrigerated up to 12 hours. Proceed with recipe as directed, increasing time dough rises in pan (step 4) to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Tomato sauce will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

WINE A red-fruited, lightly tannic Italian red: 2022 Speri Valpolicella Ripasso Classico Superiore

NOTE Find Wisconsin brick cheese at specialty cheese shops or online at wisconsincheesemart.com.

A STORIED SLICE

From the pan to the application of the sauce, Detroit-style pizza reflects the history of the city’s “golden age” of the automotive industry. The original was cooked in a deep blue-steel pan used for carrying auto parts, and the sauce was layered on top like racing stripes. Today, those blue-steel pans are less common, but you can find steel or anodized aluminum pans with a similar depth. We recommend the Detroit-style pizza pans from Lloyd Pans. (\$48 for a 10- x 14- x 2.5-inch pan, lloydpan.com)