

Italian Bread/Pizza Crust



- *¼ oz. yeast (1 package)
- *1-teaspoon sugar
- *1-cup warm water (about 100 degrees)
- *2 to 3 cups bread flour
- *2 tablespoons olive oil
- *1-teaspoon salt

Combine yeast, sugar, and 1 cup of warm water in the bowl of a heavy-duty electric stand mixer; let stand 5 minutes. Then add 2 cups of flour, oil, and salt to the bowl. Beat at low speed, using a dough hook attachment if available, for 1 minute. Gradually add additional flour, in ¼ cup measurements, until dough begins to leave the sides of the bowl and pull together. (Note: The dough will look soft and smooth, not wet and sticky or overly dry with a rough surface.)

Increase speed to medium, and beat dough for 5 minutes. Cover mixing bowl with plastic wrap, and let stand in a warm place, for 30 minutes or until dough has doubled in size. Punch dough down with your hands, and let stand an additional 10 minutes.

Dump dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Using your hands, Shape dough into a loaf shape, and place onto a lightly greased baking sheet. Cut slits across top of dough with a sharp paring knife. (The slits release interior steam during baking and prevent the loaf from splitting along the sides.)

Bake at 400° for 16 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.

For Pizza crust:

Shape dough into a ball instead of a loaf. Roll out dough onto a lightly greased baking sheet or pizza stone. Spread on pizza sauce and sprinkle with desired toppings. Bake at 475° for 20 to 25 minutes.

Freezing:

Increase the ingredient amounts as needed to achieve the desired number of single pizzas. Allow the dough to fully rise and then divide the dough into single pizza portion. Place separate portions in the freezer, and freeze the dough for up to three months. Simply thaw the dough in the fridge overnight before you use it and enjoy!