

simple practical

home cooking

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The Daily Recipe: White Wine Pizza Dough for Idaho

(Adapted from a Smitten Kitchen pizza dough recipe)

Any kind of bread making is affected by humidity. With most yeast bread recipes, the flour is added somewhat gradually, giving the baker discretion in how much to add until it feels right. For pizza dough, it is useful to have a stiffer dough. This helps it roll better, without sticking, making it easier to get it thinner.

For this recipe, the trick is to add enough flour, but still be able to work it in completely. I started the recipe with 3 cups of water (*see complete instructions below*) and found that after 10 cups of flour it was impossible to mix in any more, even though the original calculations called for two more cups. Then, I even had to add a few tablespoons of water, one at a time, to get that flour to mix. The humidity in Idaho (or any high desert climate) is usually quite low, but it can still vary enough to need adjustments in this step.

Since it was a larger lump of dough, I also kneaded it longer than the original recipe called for, until it began to hold together elastically and an indentation filled up quickly, like bread dough should. It felt right after about 6 minutes. It hardly looked like enough dough to make a large loaf of bread, but over the next two hours, it rose expansively. We made lots of pizza!

Ingredients for about 15 individual dinner plate pizzas:

3 1/4 cups warm water

1 cup white wine

2 Tablespoons active dry yeast

4 teaspoons honey

2 Tablespoons salt

1/2 cup olive oil

10 cups flour, plus more as needed

Mix the warm water and wine. I use the inner wrist-test for my water, meaning it should be warm enough to be just slightly uncomfortable, but not to really hurt. Add the yeast to this and whisk until dissolved.

Stir in the honey, salt, and olive oil.

Add the flour in increments, larger at first, then getting smaller. I began with 4 cups, whisking this in first. Then, I added 2 more cups and stirred with a wooden spoon until it was mostly moist. After that, I added a cup at a time between mixing until it just wasn't mixing in. If you think it is moist enough to finish mixing with your hands, you can do that.

At this point it shouldn't be very sticky or need much flour at all to keep it from sticking to the kneading counter. Sprinkle a thin layer of flour and knead the dough by hand until it becomes elastic and springs back when poked.

Grease a large bowl (I use the same one I mixed it all in, without even washing it, just making sure there are not big clumps of unmixed floury dough in it.) Put the dough in the bowl, then turn the greased side up. Cover the dough with plastic and let it rise for about 2 hours, or until doubled.

Next, press the dough to mostly deflate it. Make it into a ball and let it rest about 15 minutes. You might want to cover it again with plastic or a bowl to keep it on the moist side.

For dinner plate size individual pizzas, tear off pieces of dough about the size of a small orange, one at a time. Push it flat into a disk, then turn over and roll with a rolling pin, altering the direction as needed. Keep the counter sprinkled with barely enough flour to keep it from sticking, and possibly turn the dough over another time or two to help with that, too. Keep the thickness as uniform as possible. A crust can be formed later as desired.

Build your pizza and bake, hopefully in a backyard brick oven. But if you don't have that, the next best thing is to use a pizza stone preheated in a very hot oven.