

# HOW TO MAKE PIZZA HEALTHY



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Pizza has suffered from the ubiquitous American urge to take a good thing and overdo it. Crusts bloated with cheese. Extreme amounts of sausage and pepperoni. But it is possible to have a healthy pizza dinner that is both low in saturated fat and loaded with veggies—and even fruit! Just a few simple tricks will get you on your way to a healthy pizza night tonight.

## 8 EASY TIPS FOR MAKING PIZZA HEALTHY:

1. Use **whole-wheat dough**—it has more fiber and nutrients than white. Make your own or buy it. Many supermarkets and even some pizza joints sell balls of dough. Keep a few stocked in your freezer and defrost one when you're in the mood for pizza.
2. If you buy your pizza dough, **check the ingredient list** to make sure it doesn't contain any partially hydrogenated fat (trans fat), which is associated with increased risk of heart disease.
3. If you use tomato sauce, beware of the sodium content in store-bought versions. To **make a low-sodium sauce**, stir fresh or dried herbs into no-salt-added tomato sauce.
4. **Add vegetables.** If you have a picky eater in your house, make sure you have their favorite veggies on hand for pizza night. You can sometimes hide veggies, too; try shredded zucchini or carrots.

5. **Fruit is good on pizza** too—really! Canadian bacon and pineapple, pear and Gorgonzola, even apple and Cheddar—are all delicious combinations.

6. If you're a pepperoni lover, **try turkey pepperoni.** You'll be surprised at how good it is. Or switch up your meat of choice and try chicken, Italian turkey sausage or even baked flavored tofu.

7. Cheese can really jack up the calories and fat in pizza. (Of course, cheese also happens to be the best part!) So **use a little less cheese** to keep it healthy. Choose a really flavorful cheese like super sharp Cheddar or Gorgonzola; a little goes a long way. Use reduced-fat cheese with caution, as some of it doesn't melt very well. Reduced-fat ricotta and mozzarella work great. But reduced-fat Cheddar, for example, can turn a little rubbery when melted. It works better to just use a little less of "real" extra-sharp Cheddar or any full-flavored cheese.

8. **Get creative.** Have fun and experiment with pizza in ways that happen to improve them nutritionally. Using beans, pureed in the food processor, as the sauce for a nacho-inspired pizza, is a great example.

**TRY OUR EASY WHOLE-WHEAT PIZZA DOUGH.** This dough comes together quickly—especially if you have a food processor—and is really easy to roll. To make the dough ahead of time, prepare through Step 3, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 1 day. Or tightly wrap the unrisen dough in oiled plastic wrap and freeze for up to 3 months. Defrost the dough in the refrigerator overnight. Let refrigerated (or previously frozen) dough stand at room temperature for 1 hour before using.

- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons lukewarm water (105-115°F)**
- 1 package active dry yeast (2 1/4 teaspoons)**
- 1 teaspoon sugar**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup whole-wheat flour**
- 1 cup bread flour or all-purpose flour, plus additional for dusting**
- 2 tablespoons yellow cornmeal**

1. Stir water, yeast, sugar and salt in a large bowl; let stand until the yeast has dissolved, about 5 minutes. Stir in whole-wheat flour, bread flour (or all-purpose flour) and cornmeal until the dough begins to come together.

2. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. (Alternatively, mix the dough in a food processor. Process until it forms a ball, then process for 1 minute to knead.)

3. Place the dough in an oiled bowl and turn to coat. (To make individual pizzas, see Variation.) Cover with a clean kitchen towel and set aside in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

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4. When you're ready to make your pizza, turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Dust the top with flour; dimple with your fingertips to shape into a thick, flattened circle—don't worry if it's not perfectly symmetrical. Then use a rolling pin to roll into a circle about 14 inches in diameter.

## MAKES 1 POUND PIZZA DOUGH.

**PER POUND:** 970 CALORIES; 5 G FAT (1 G SAT, 1 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 200 G CARBOHYDRATE; 36 G PROTEIN; 22 G FIBER; 1,152 MG SODIUM; 782 MG POTASSIUM.

**INDIVIDUAL VARIATION:** The dough can be turned into 4 or 6 personal-size pizzas. After kneading, divide the dough into 4 or 6 equal balls. Brush with oil and place 3 inches apart on a baking sheet. Cover and set aside until doubled in size, about 1 hour. Roll each portion into a 6-to-8-inch circle.

## PIZZA ESSENTIALS

One way to ensure a really great pizza crust is to use a wood-burning oven that reaches a temperature of at least 600°F, a feature most home kitchens lack. Fortunately, you can transform your regular oven into a pizza oven by baking directly on a hot pizza stone. The unglazed clay surface absorbs and distributes heat evenly, producing a crisp crust. They are available at most large kitchenware stores and you can get a basic pizza stone and peel for about \$20. Here are some tips for using them:

**USING A PIZZA STONE** Place a pizza stone in a cold oven on the lowest rack. Allow at least 30 minutes for the stone to heat before baking the pizza.

Let dough come to room temperature before baking. If cold dough is placed directly on a heated pizza stone, the abrupt change in temperature may cause the stone to crack.

Because pizza stones are porous, they absorb odors. Avoid using soap to clean them. Wash with warm water and use baking soda to remove stubborn stains.

**USING A PIZZA PEEL** The best way to transfer a pizza to a stone is to use a wooden paddle called a peel—and it is much easier to slide a small pizza from a peel than to slide a large one. To use a peel for recipes that call for 12 ounces of dough, divide the dough in half and roll one piece into a 10-inch circle. Transfer the crust to a cornmeal-dusted pizza peel. Turn edges under to make a slight rim. Assemble the pizza, using half the topping. Make sure the dough slides easily on the peel; add more cornmeal if necessary.

Open the oven door and set the tip of the pizza peel near the back of the stone. Pull the pizza peel toward you, letting the pizza slide onto the stone. Quickly close the door. Baking time for a pizza baked directly on a stone is shorter than for pan pizza: allow 8 to 10 minutes. Assemble the second pizza on the peel with the remaining dough and toppings while the first one bakes.

To remove the pizza from the oven, use a wide metal spatula to slide the pizza onto a pizza peel or pizza pan.

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