

PIZZA DOUGH

by Chef Jefe Birkner



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Make a sponge by mixing together

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup lukewarm water

2 tsp. active dry yeast

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour

Let it rise 20 to 30 minutes, then add

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup lukewarm water

1 tbsp. milk

2 tbsp. olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

$1\frac{3}{4}$ cups unbleached all-purpose flour

MIX THE DOUGH with a wooden spoon then knead on a floured board. It will be soft and a little sticky. Use quick light motions with your hands so the dough won't stick. Add more flour to the board as you knead but no more than is absolutely necessary. A soft moist dough makes a light and very crispy crust. Knead for 10 to 15 minutes to develop strength and elasticity in the dough. Put it in a bowl rubbed with olive oil, and oil the surface of the dough to prevent a crust from forming. Cover the bowl with a towel and put it in a warm place, approximately 90°F to 110°F. An oven heated just by its pilot light is a good spot. Let the dough rise to double its size, for about 2 hours, then punch it down. Let it rise about 40 minutes more, then shape and bake it. This recipe makes one 12-inch to 14-inch pizza, or several small ones.