

MASTUNICOLA

MAKES ONE 12-INCH PIZZA; 6 SLICES

A classic of Naples, this pie was born as a thrifty *pizza bianca* (no tomatoes) that was traditionally topped with basil (which is *vasunicola* in Neapolitan dialect and probably the source of the pizza's name), a bit of cheese, and lard. I make my version with thinly sliced *lardo* (salt-cured pork fat), added after the pizza comes out of the oven. Although it's not cooked, the lardo melts a bit, becoming soft and translucent and adding some serious bacony richness.

1 (9-ounce/255-gram) ball
Napoletana Dough (page 187)

Flour, for dusting

5 fresh basil leaves, torn in half

3 ounces (85 grams) mozzarella
di bufala, well drained

Fine sea salt

Extra virgin olive oil in a spouted
container, for drizzling

6 paper-thin strips (3 grams each)
lardo

Make a fire in a wood-fired oven (see Building Your Fire, page 195).
Or, if you will be using a home oven, ready the oven as instructed in
Home-Oven Broiler Method (see page 202).

Prepare the dough according to the instructions on page 197 for Wood-
Fired Oven Baking or, if using a home oven, according to the instructions
for Home-Oven Broiler Method.

Arrange the pieces of basil, shiny side up, over the dough. Pinch the
cheese into quarter-size pieces and place them, skin side down, on the
pizza, using some of the cheese to cover part of each piece of basil.
This helps prevent the basil from burning.

Sprinkle the pizza with salt. Then, working from the center outward,
drizzle a spiral of oil (about 1½ teaspoons) over the surface.

Bake the pizza as directed for Wood-Fired Oven Baking or Home-Oven
Broiler Method.

Transfer the pizza to a cutting board. Arrange the *lardo* strips from the
center toward the edges, spacing them evenly like the spokes on a wheel.
Cut between the strips into 6 wedges and drizzle with a bit more oil.

NAPOLETANA DOUGH

MAKES 28 OUNCES (795 GRAMS) DOUGH, ENOUGH FOR THREE 9 TO 10-OUNCE BALLS

An authentic Neapolitan pizza has to be made with Italian *doppio zero* (double zero) flour. Double zero is a designation that indicates the fineness of the grind, with the scale going from 2, the coarsest, to 00, the finest. Double-zero flour is milled from soft wheat, which has less elastic gluten than hard wheat. The result is a tender dough that requires a light touch and a gentle hand when you're working with it. Caputo and San Felice are the two revered double-zero brands for Neapolitan pizza. I always tell my students they're like the Coke and Pepsi of Naples, and I recommend both. Caputo is easier to find in American supermarkets. I prefer to use fresh yeast in this dough, because it's the traditional Neapolitan way.

The only difference between my wood-fired and my home-oven Neapolitan dough is that I add a bit of malt to the home-oven version to help with browning. With the intense heat of a wood-fired oven, there's no need for malt.

7 grams fresh yeast, broken into small pieces or 2-3 grams (3/4 teaspoon) active dry yeast

70 grams (1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon) warm water (80°F to 85°F)

453 grams (3³/₄ cups) 00 flour, preferably Caputo or San Felice, plus more for kneading as needed

10 grams (1 tablespoon plus 1/4 teaspoon) diastatic malt if baking in a home oven

210 grams (3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons) ice water

90 grams Poolish (page 47)

10 grams (2 teaspoons) fine sea salt

For baker's percentages, see page 302.

Put the yeast in a small bowl, add the warm water, and whisk vigorously for 30 seconds. The yeast should dissolve in the water and the mixture should foam. If it doesn't and the yeast granules float, the yeast is "dead" and should be discarded. Begin again with a fresh amount of yeast and water.

Combine the flour and malt (if using) in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. With the mixer running on the lowest speed, pour in most of the ice water, reserving about 2 tablespoons, followed by the yeast-water mixture. Pour the reserved water into the yeast bowl, swirl it around to dislodge any bits of yeast stuck to the bowl, and add to the mixer. Mix for about 15 seconds, stop the mixer, and add the poolish.

Continue to mix the dough at the lowest speed for about 1 minute, until most of the dough comes together around the hook. Stop the mixer. Use your fingers to pull away any dough clinging to the hook, and scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl with a bowl scraper or rubber spatula.

continued



PRO TIP

A NOTE FOR PROFESSIONALS

The Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana guidelines require a dough ball weighing between 180 and 250 grams. For home cooks, the recipe I've given here has been rounded slightly, so that it makes enough for 3 9-ounce/225-gram dough balls.

Add the salt and mix on the lowest speed for 1 minute to combine. Stop the mixer, pull the dough off the hook, and continue to mix the dough on the lowest speed for about 1 minute. The dough won't look completely smooth, but if you rub some between your fingers, you should not feel any undissolved salt. If you do, continue to mix for another minute.

Using the bowl scraper, transfer the dough to an unfloured work surface, then knead it for 2 to 3 minutes, until smooth (see Kneading the Dough, page 24). If the dough is too sticky to knead, sprinkle it with just enough flour to allow you to work with it. Cover the dough with a damp dish towel and let it rest at room temperature for about 20 minutes.

Use your dough cutter to loosen the dough and to cut it into thirds. Weigh each piece, adjusting the quantity of dough as necessary to give you equal weights of 9 ounces (255 grams) each. You may have a little extra dough.

Form the dough into balls (see Balling the Dough, page 26). Set the balls on a half sheet pan, spacing them about 3 inches apart. Or, if you will be baking the balls on different days, place one on a quarter sheet pan and the other two on a second quarter sheet pan, spacing them 3 inches apart. Wrap the pan(s) airtight with a double layer of plastic wrap, sealing the wrap well under pan(s). Put the pan(s) in a level spot in the refrigerator and refrigerate for 36 to 48 hours. If the dough will be baked in a home oven, it is best to refrigerate it for the full 48 hours.