

FN1890 (Reviewed July 2026)

Pinchin' Pennies in the Kitchen

7 Steps to Making Your Own Pizza

Pizza sometimes is viewed as unhealthy or even as “junk food,” but well-chosen toppings make pizza a healthful menu option that can include all of the food groups (grain, vegetables, protein, fruit and dairy or alternative). Pizza can vary greatly in the number of calories per slice, depending on the toppings chosen and type of crust, so check the nutrition information on the ingredients you choose.



Try creating personalized pizzas with each of the food groups represented and a range of topping choices. Set up a “pizza buffet” to allow your guests to create their own pizza.

1. Start with a crust. A wide range of pizza crust mixes, pre-made crusts and refrigerated doughs are available. Try a whole-grain crust to get the benefits of fiber and a range of vitamins and minerals. Or try making mini pizzas with pita bread, English muffin halves, bagel halves, lavash or naan as the base. Gluten-free and vegetarian crust options are available, too.

2. Add a sauce. Go light on the sauce to avoid a soggy crust. You can use the old standby tomato-based pizza sauce, such as the provided recipe, or another sauce, such as:

- Alfredo sauce
- Asian peanut sauce
- Barbecue sauce
- Hummus (seasoned chickpea dip)
- Pesto (made of basil, olive oil and other ingredients)
- Salsa

3. Add some veggies, such as:

- Artichoke hearts, sliced
- Broccoli florets, roasted
- Carrots, shredded
- Mushrooms, sliced
- Onion, diced
- Red, yellow and green peppers, sliced or diced
- Spinach leaves
- Tomatoes, diced

4. Try some fruit on your pizza, such as:

- Apples, thinly sliced
- Mango, thinly sliced
- Pears, thinly sliced
- Pineapple chunks

5. Add some protein, such as:

- Bacon, cooked, drained and crumbled
- Black or white beans
- Chicken, grilled
- Crab meat
- Egg, hard-cooked and chopped
- Ground beef, cooked and drained
- Ham, cubed or sliced
- Italian sausage, cooked and drained
- Pork, shredded
- Shrimp

6. Add cheese. Mozzarella is the typical pizza topper, but be adventuresome and explore the range of cheese options, such as adding a sprinkle of:

- Cheddar
- Feta
- Havarti
- Parmesan
- Swiss

7. Bake your creation in a hot oven (450 F or above).

Adjust your baking time, depending on the number of toppings. Consider baking your pizza on a grill to impart a smoky, grilled flavor.

Key to abbreviations c. = cup • oz. = ounce • tsp. = teaspoon • Tbsp. = tablespoon • g = grams • mg = milligrams

Whole-wheat Pizza Crust

¾ c. whole-wheat flour
¾ c. all-purpose flour
1 package quick-rising yeast (2¼ tsp.)
¾ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. sugar
½ c. warm water (120 to 130 F)
2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil

Combine whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, yeast, salt and sugar in a mixing bowl. Stir to mix dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, combine hot water and oil (water should be 120 to 130 F); gradually combine water mixture with dry ingredients until a sticky ball forms.

If dough is too dry, add 1 to 2 Tbsp. warm water; if dough is too sticky, add 1 to 2 Tbsp. flour. Using a stand mixer, process dough for 1 minute to knead. Spray a sheet of plastic wrap with cooking spray and cover bowl, allowing dough to rest for 10 to 20 minutes before rolling. Preheat oven to 500 F and roll out dough (13-inch circle). Brush crust with olive oil and poke with fork.

Makes 10 servings (slices). Each serving has 80 calories, 1.5 g fat, 3 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 180 mg sodium.

(Recipe courtesy of the North Dakota Wheat Commission at www.ndwheat.com)

Pizza Crust

2¼ c. all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
1 c. skim milk
¼ c. unsalted butter, room temperature

Preheat oven to 450 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper for easy cleanup. In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients. Using dough hook, mix on low speed until one ball of dough forms. If not using a stand mixer, stir together ingredients until a ball of dough forms. Sprinkle flour onto rolling surface, remove dough from bowl and pat with flour to form into solid ball.

Note: Dough may be slightly sticky straight from the mixer. Roll dough into a ball and set onto prepared baking sheet. Use rolling pin coated with flour to roll out dough to desired thickness, ¼ inch thick. Top with desired toppings and bake for 10 to 12 minutes.

Makes 10 servings of crust. Each serving has 150 calories, 5 g fat, 4 g protein, 23 carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 220 mg sodium.

Homemade Pizza Sauce

1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
2 Tbsp. minced fresh onion
1 tsp. dried parsley
1½ tsp. dried oregano
1 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
½ tsp. dried basil

In a large stockpot, combine all ingredients, stir and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes.

Makes 16 servings of sauce. Each 1-ounce serving has 10 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g protein, 2 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 130 mg sodium.

Cauliflower Crust

1 medium head of cauliflower
1 large egg
1 tsp. Italian seasoning (dried oregano or basil)
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. ground black pepper
½ c. Parmesan or mozzarella cheese, grated/shredded
Cooking spray

Preheat oven to 375 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Rinse cauliflower, remove outer leaves, separate into florets and chop into smaller pieces. Process in food processor in 2 batches until “rice” texture forms. Transfer to baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Remove cooked cauliflower rice from oven, transfer to a bowl lined with linen towel and let cool for 5 minutes. Squeeze liquid out of the ball (cauliflower inside cloth). Repeat several times until barely any liquid comes out. Increase oven temperature to 450 F. Whisk egg with dried herbs, salt and pepper in a bowl for 10 seconds. Add cheese and cauliflower to mixture and mix very well with spatula until combined. Line same baking sheet with new parchment paper and spray with cooking spray. Transfer cauliflower dough to the middle of the baking sheet and flatten with hands until thin pizza crust forms. Bake 20 minutes, then flip with spatula and bake for a few more minutes. Top with toppings and bake again until cheese on top turns golden brown (approximately 5 minutes).

Makes eight servings. Each serving has 50 calories, 2 g fat, 4 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 160 mg sodium.

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