

PIZZA WITH BUFALA AND 'NDUJA, WITH SAFFRON AND PANCETTA

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE DOUGH

1 level tsp. dry yeast
1 level tsp. unrefined sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (160 ml) warm water
6 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. (190 g) Manitoba flour
2 oz. (60 g) semola flour
1 level tsp. fine salt

FOR THE BUFALA AND 'NDUJA PIZZA

2 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. (65 g) passata di pomodoro
1 tsp. unrefined sugar
1 tbsp. olive oil
salt, pepper
2 tbsp. 'nduja
2 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. (80 g) mozzarella di bufala
a few basil leaves

FOR THE SAFFRON AND PANCETTA PIZZA

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. (100 g) plain mozzarella, diced and strained for 15 minutes
 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. (20 g) Parmigiano-Reggiano shavings
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. (15 g) pancetta, finely sliced
1 tbsp. pine nuts
a pinch of crushed saffron threads infused in 1 tsp. of hot water for 10 minutes
pepper

I saw no point in trying to make pizza myself until I moved from central Paris to a small village in the countryside. From that moment on, what would have just been a cooking challenge became a matter of domestic necessity. I was made aware that we would not be able to survive without decent pizza, so I had to make it happen. I knew from the start that without a professional oven or—even better—a wood-fired one, I would not be able to replicate the pizze I loved. On the other hand, I learned that with great ingredients I could definitely do better than an average French pizzeria. The key to success is to make small investments: a pizza stone, a baking peel, and the right kind of Italian flour are must-haves. I use the Manitoba and semola varieties from organic brand Mulino Marino and this makes a world of difference. Once you have the tools and the flour, you're almost there. The last golden rule is to go very easy on the toppings and to remember that every water-based ingredient you put on your pizza might get in the way of the base becoming nice and crunchy.

Five hours before cooking, make the dough. Put the yeast, sugar, and half the warm water in a small bowl. Mix and leave to rest until it foams for 5–10 minutes.

In a large bowl mix the flours and salt. Form a well and pour in the yeast water and the rest of the warm water. Mix with a fork until a ball forms, then use your hand to knead the dough for 5 minutes, until smooth. Divide in two balls and leave them to rise in a warm place, each in their own bowl covered with plastic wrap so they don't dry out.

Pre-heat your oven at the highest temperature (conventional is better than fan-assisted), up to 570 °F (300 °C) if your oven allows it. This should take at least 15 minutes. Remember your oven must be as hot as possible for the dough to rise well.

For the first pizza:

In a small bowl mix the passata, sugar, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Using your hands, gently spread the first ball of dough on the floured baking peel. I like it to be very thin with a thicker outer layer. Spread the tomato sauce on it and scatter bits of the 'nduja. Slide it into the oven for 7–10 minutes, until the dough starts to color.

Take it out of the oven, put pieces of torn mozzarella di bufala on top and a few basil leaves. Finish with a splash of good olive oil.

For the second pizza:

Using your hands, gently spread the remaining ball of dough on the floured baking peel. Scatter the mozzarella, parmigiano, pancetta, and pine nuts. Drizzle with the saffron water and finally pepper generously. Bake in the oven for 7–10 minutes.

For this amount of yeast, 4–6 hours of resting is good. If you want it to rest longer, reduce the yeast amount slightly.

Long leavening ensures a deeper taste and does away with the yeast taste you get with dough that has not had enough time to rise.

