

# Chicago-Style Deep-Dish Pizza – Comfort du Jour

Distinctly different from a classic New York pie in so many ways—the tender crust, the order of layering the toppings, the longer time in the oven—this deep-dish pizza reminded me of a meat and cheese casserole with a crust that was crunchy on the outside and soft and chewy inside. We will forever be loyal to the thin crust New York pizza, but this Chicago-style pie was delicious and we are already dreaming up flavor ideas for the next one.

You will need a deep-dish pizza pan or a large (12-inch) cast-iron skillet for baking this pizza. Note that the recipe requires a lengthy rise time on the dough, so you'll want to plan ahead to stay on schedule for dinner.

Adapted from [Jeff Mauro's Chicago-Style Deep-Dish Pizza](#)

## INGREDIENTS

11 oz. (about 1 1/3 cups) lukewarm water  
A packet active dry yeast\* (see notes for instant yeast or sourdough adjustment)  
1 tsp. sugar  
12 oz. (about 2 3/4 cups) all-purpose flour\*  
3 oz. (about 2/3 cup) whole wheat flour  
3 oz. (about 2/3 cup) medium grind cornmeal  
2 tsp. fine sea salt  
3 oz. (6 Tbsp.) extra virgin olive oil

1 1/2 pounds deli-sliced mozzarella (the firm style, not soft white)  
12 oz. spicy Italian bulk sausage  
1/2 medium onion, thinly sliced  
1/2 red bell pepper, thinly sliced  
2 fat handfuls fresh washed baby spinach leaves  
1/2 package thinly sliced pepperoni  
28 oz. can San Marzano whole tomatoes, drained  
1/4 cup prepared pizza sauce  
1/2 cup [parm-romano blend cheese](#) (see my linked blog post for more details on this)

## \*NOTES

Does your yeast packet say “instant?” If so, skip the first instruction step for blooming the yeast in warm water. Only “active dry” yeast requires blooming. Instant yeast may be added directly with the flour.

If you're a sourdough nerd like me, here's how I converted the recipe to accommodate 4 ounces of ripe sourdough starter: omit the yeast (or use a small amount to boost rise action), reduce AP flour to 10 ounces and water to 9 ounces. Skip the step of blooming yeast. I did not need to adjust the rising time.

If you prefer an all-white flour crust (first of all, you're missing a lot of flavor), adjust the amount of all-purpose flour to 18 ounces (about 3 1/2 cups).

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## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix 1 cup water, active dry yeast and sugar in a bowl and let it rest a few minutes until foamy (Skip this step if using instant yeast).
2. In a stand mixer or large bowl, combine yeast mixture with flour, cornmeal, salt and remaining water (and sugar, if you didn't use it to bloom the yeast). Mix until a sticky, shaggy ball of dough forms. Pour in olive oil, cover and let it rest about 15 minutes.
3. Knead in olive oil until dough is soft, smooth and sticky. This should come together within about 3 minutes. Do not over knead. Transfer dough to a lightly oiled clean bowl, cover and let rise at room temperature until it's doubled in size. This may take up to 6 hours, depending on the yeast method and the warmth of your kitchen. If you want to speed it up a bit, put the covered bowl in the oven with the oven light on, and check on it at the 3 hour mark.
4. Prep the other pizza ingredients by browning sausage, onions and peppers. Sauté spinach leaves until wilted and moisture is cooked out of them. Slice or shred your cheese. Drain the can of tomatoes, reserving puree and juice for another purpose. Set all topping ingredients aside until dough is ready to bake. Keep the cheese in the fridge until it's time to bake.
5. Preheat oven to 450° F, with a rack in the center position of the oven.
6. Spray deep-dish pan or skillet with olive oil spray and transfer risen dough to the pan. Using your hands, spread dough out across the pan, gently stretching to meet the edges and up the side of the pan. If the dough springs back a lot, cover with a clean towel for 10 minutes to relax the gluten then proceed with the dough shaping. If you're using a 12-inch skillet, you may only need about 3/4 of the total dough.
7. Layer the sliced mozzarella all over the dough base, with edges of the cheese overlapped for good coverage. I ran out of slices and filled in gaps with shredded mozzarella—no big deal.
8. Scatter the browned sausage crumbles evenly over the cheese, then layer on the sautéed onions, peppers and spinach. Finally, arrange the pepperoni slices evenly around the pizza.
9. Use your hands to squish each plum tomato slightly, and arrange them all over the top of the pizza. Spoon the pizza sauce into the gaps between tomatoes.
10. Liberally sprinkle the parm-romano blend cheese completely over all the pizza toppings, and finish with a drizzle of olive oil. I drizzled with the grease from browning the sausage.
11. Bake 25 minutes, until crust is evenly browned and parmesan cheese is golden and bubbly. Give it a turn at the halfway mark for even baking. Allow pizza to rest at least 5 minutes, then use two spatulas to carefully slide it out of the pan to a pizza sheet for serving.