**The Cook House**

**Pizza Making & Cooking Instructions**

We have sampled these pizzas ourselves (both the making and the eating, with great success) so, hopefully, this is a helpful, layperson’s guide:

1. **Defrosting**

Defrost the pizza dough balls before use (this can be done by leaving in the fridge the night before or 4 hours at room temperature).

1. **Proving**

Once defrosted, you need to prove (let the dough expand) the dough balls at room temperature for 4-6 hrs or until they have doubled in size.

If you ordered the pre-sealed trays, simply leave the tray the dough sealed tray. Or if you ordered loose dough, move the defrosted balls into the large dough trays leaving space for them to expand (about 1”) between each dough ball. Ensure the lid is placed on top to avoid them drying out.

***Top Tip:*** *It makes sense to prep the pizzas before you light the oven as this can take a while. It’s a fun thing to do as a group and because the pizza cooks quickly, if you want to eat together, you might be best to do all the prep in advance. It also makes sense to nominate a chef and a sous chef, one to keep an eye on the oven and one to keep the ready-prepped pizzas going in. We do not advise children to use the pizza oven.*

1. **Stretching**

It’s not impossible but it is a lot harder to stretch out dough that’s cold (it’s too elastic), using a room temperature dough ball will give you the best results.

Carefully take a defrosted and proven dough ball and place on a floured surface (we like semolina flour for extra crispy base). Keeping your hands as flat as possible start to flatten the dough ball, pushing outwards in all directions from the centre. Leaving ½ inch around the outside so you create a small crust. Your dough ball is full of tiny air bubbles, you just want to push these into the crust rather than squeeze them out of the pizza altogether.

No need to be too gentle but if you break the dough, don’t panic, just pinch up the gap or roll back into a ball and start again (if you need to start again then dust off as much excess four first to avoid drying the dough). Treat the dough with care but don’t be afraid of it. It’s very malleable and if you feel confident you can spin it and stretch it with your hands. Please do clear up any wayward dough from walls or ceilings!

Use the rolling pins provided if you prefer (although apparently this is not authentic pizzaiolo-style, neither is pineapple but you know what you like!). Each dough ball should make a 12” round pizza but don’t be embarrassed by oval, square or unrecognisable-shaped ones. They all taste as good.

1. **Topping**

Lightly brush oil around the rim of the circular mesh (provided), this will help stop your pizza sticking when cooked. Then, once you are happy with your base, move it onto the mesh. This is a good time to reshape any strange corners and get that perfect(ish) circle. Don’t push your base down too hard onto the mesh as you will struggle to get it off later no matter how well oiled!

Add a ladle full of tomato sauce and spread it around to the edges. The easiest way to do this is to pile the sauce in the middle and then draw a spiral pattern with the ladle until the sauce reaches the crust. The rest of the toppings are up to you quantity and taste-wise but you don’t want to overload the pizza with toppings otherwise the air can’t get to the base and will make it soggy. We want to avoid soggy bottoms! Oh and don’t forget the cheese.

***Top Tip:*** *Try adding your chosen toppings in small clumps rather than spreading them out thinly. This will stop them drying out or burning when cooking.*

*For added flare, splash on some olive oil to your finished pizza and sprinkle with oregano and black pepper.*

1. **Cooking**

Make sure you get the Minute 5 pizza oven nice and hot BEFORE you cook any pizza. This should take about 30/45mins. You will only need a couple of smaller sized logs (don’t overload it to start – a mistake we made!), a handful of kindling and a firelighter. Start the fire in the middle of the oven, the aim at this point is to heat up the ceramic floor rather than the whole oven. Poke it around to get it going and keep an eye on it at all times. Close the door to maximise heat once the fire is going well. It may start smoky but the smoke will dissipate as the temperature rises. Check the temperature using the laser gun, aim it at the floor of the oven. You want to it be around 400 degrees centigrade, before you cook anything.

Once you are ready to cook, move the logs in the oven to the back or one side exposing the ceramic floor. You should be able to cook up to 2 pizzas in one go, or one at a time if you are cooking to order. Pop the pizza in the oven on the mesh. Watch it carefully. If you have the oven hot enough, it will only take around 90 seconds but there are no medals for speed so take as long as it needs. Use the pizza peel or wheel to rotate it quickly ensuring all sides get cooked for same amount of time (the side nearest the fire will cook faster!). When you are happy your pizza is ready (the cheese should be bubbling not black), remove using the pizza peel and wait to cool before removing from the mesh. If you’ve oiled the mesh enough it should come away easily.

Slice, eat and enjoy.

***Top Tip:*** *Keep the logs topped up (remember do not overload it) whilst you are cooking, you may need to move the whole fire again to keep the floor hot enough.*

1. **Cleaning up**

Once you have finished, let the oven cool down on its own. Please sweep away any embers once cooled and go and clear up the flour and bits of dough that may be on the ceiling!

No need to clean the ceramic floor of the oven, in fact this can often led to cracks.