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Things not go as planned? Here is a partial list of *Doughsasters* and how to make it all *DoughK*.

By Doctor Dough

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Dough is difficult to stretch / tears easily:

Have you noticed the temperature of your dough as you handled it with your hands? If it felt cool or cold, that's the most likely culprit. Simply give your dough more time to come to room temperature before handling. An hour can make a big difference in the dough's performance. If it is still cool and too stiff, add another hour until you find the right amount of time. Also remember that frozen dough will need about twice the time to reach room temperature as refrigerated dough.

NOTE: Sometimes, pizza waits for no one and you need to get your cook on. Assuming your dough is more than an hour out of the fridge or freezer and that it's on the way towards a good working temperature, you can still work with it. You will need to test your patience and perform the actions in step 3 very slowly. The dough will eventually stretch, eventually.

Dough stretches way too easy:

This can be caused by a few different reasons. First, it's probably the exact opposite of the above *Doughsaster*. If you let your dough sit out of the fridge / freezer for too long, it can warm up too much and become too relaxed. This is not a bad thing. The dough will be more difficult to handle because more relaxed dough stretches easier. There is no need to re-chill the dough. Just use some extra caution during the stretching / gravity assist part. To avoid this in the future, simply keep your dough out of the fridge / freezer for less time. Or, maybe you've had too many cocktails and you seriously doubt your ability to get this warm dough to do your bidding. In this case, go ahead and chuck it back into the fridge for 20 - 30 minutes. Your dough will firm up, you'll get your confidence up, and your pizza recipients will still be wow'd, just a bit later.

Another possibility is that your dough has been in the refrigerator for an extended period of time, like 2 weeks or longer. This can cause the gluten structures to break down leaving you with dough that wants to fall apart, even while cold. Once your dough is at this point, it may have a sour smell. There could also be a layer of clear liquid on top of the dough. (This is alcohol, produced by the yeast. Simply pour it off.) Congratulations! You've unintentionally made sourdough dough. Again, this isn't a bad thing! Like the above scenario, the dough will be more difficult to handle and will stretch (a lot) easier. In return for dough that is difficult to handle you will get a lot of extra delicious flavor. As long as there is no mold, you're good to go. Just remember to take a breath because dough in this state will want to fall apart.

Additionally, don't expect it to get too puffy during baking.

Using the outdoor grill/BBQ:

Doctor Dough advises against this setup. Grills are great at providing heat from the bottom and poor at providing it anywhere else. With a baking stone/steel/cast iron on the grill, it will get very very hot. Too hot, in fact. Your pizza will burn on the bottom. And because of that poor heat distribution, it will be undercooked on top.

High heat outdoor gas or wood fired ovens:

Examples of popular brands are Ooni or Gozney. While these ovens are fantastic pieces of equipment, we *Dough*not recommend using our pizza dough in one of these ovens. You might be able to have success on the oven's lowest temperature setting. However, the pizza will probably burn.

Uneven cook on the pizza:

The most common forms of an uneven cook is the pizza top is undercooked while the bottom is just right, or vice versa. The easiest way to fix this is to raise or lower your baking surface in the oven.

DO NOT DO THIS WHILE THE OVEN IS ON!!! Even with super heat/oven/grill/fire proof gloves, this is a very bad idea.

Warnings out of the way, here's how this works: If your pizza top is undercooked and bottom overcooked, try moving your oven rack up, towards the top of the oven. One single rung, about 3 inches, can make all the difference. Conversely, if your pizza is cooking too fast on top while the bottom is undercooked, try moving the cooking surface down, towards the bottom of the oven. The reason this works is that most ovens heat from the bottom. Even in "pizza" mode or with convection, a move higher or lower can have a great effect. Some ovens allow for separate control of the top and bottom heating elements (beyond broil or bake). Increasing or decreasing one or both of these will also allow you to get the best cook on your pizza for your oven.

Want more char on top:

The easiest way to get that photoshoot worthy char on the top of your pizza is to turn on the broiler. If you have broiler temperature settings, set it to High.

NOTE: Follow the regular preheating instructions at the beginning of this guide. Do NOT preheat your oven and baking stone with the broiler.

Launch your pie into the oven as usual. Part way through cooking, switch on the broiler. When your pizza is done cooking, lift it up close to the flame / electric element. Keep an eye on it because that pizza can go from zero to burnt in no time.

Another NOTE: This is a great time to use that metal pizza peel that has been safely tucked away into the nether recesses of your kitchen. Metal peels are great at picking up cooked pizzas from hot surfaces and the long handle keeps your hands away from the heating elements.

After your pizza has reached char perfection, remove it and set your oven back to the previous setting. Repeat for as many pizzas as you need.

Final NOTE: All ovens perform differently. You will need to experiment with the timing. Some ovens take a long while for the broiler to turn on after the oven is already hot. Some kick on immediately. This will all factor into the timing of broiler activation.

We *Dough*verwhelmingly endorse this method because it's simple, safe, effective and fun! However, if that method doesn't work...

Another is to use a kitchen torch. After cooking, remove your pizza and set it down as usual. Spark up that torch and begin with nice smooth motions, moving the torch around the pizza. If there's one area that is begging for a char, concentrate more on that. However, keep the torch moving. Holding it in place will quickly burn your pizza.

Dough sticks to peel:

Few things evoke instant shame and self-doubt like watching your beautifully shaped pizza-to-be get stuck while trying to launch it. On one end of the emotional roller coaster is your pie gets a bit misshapen, a topping or two falls out of place and some of the dough bunched up on itself. After somehow blaming this on your complicated relationship with your parents, you'll realize that this isn't a *Doughsaster* and it's still delicious and awesome. On the other end of the spectrum is a pizza that won't budge while launching EXCEPT when you violently shake it in a last ditch effort to set it free, and the whole thing winds up on the floor. This is a *Doughsaster*.

The first place to look is the AP flour. When you initially place your dough in there, make sure the entire thing is covered in flour. Flip it over a few times. Make sure the sides are also floured.

The next place to look is your pizza peel. There should be enough semolina flour on there and somewhat evenly spread across the entire face of the peel. Is your peel metal or wood? Dough sticks to metal more than wood, even when well floured. Make sure the surface of your peel is smooth and that there isn't some imperfection that keeps catching the dough.

I didn't use all the dough balls that I removed from the fridge:

Option 1:

Start creating another pizza with it. After it's shaped and on the peel, LAUNCH IT! Skip the toppings and bake it for about 3 or 4 minutes. Remove it and allow it to cool. Wrap it in foil and throw it in the fridge. You now have parbaked pizza that can be topped and placed under the broiler for a quick meal.

Option 2: You can put it back into the fridge. The dough will have risen but that's *DoughK*. If you plan on using it the next day sometime, you're fine. Just reduce the time that it rests outside the fridge. If you forget about it for more than a day, it's time to bake focaccia! Grab a metal baking pan, loaf pan, or some other small pan and your mostest bestest olive oil. There's plenty of recipes for out there for focaccia and you can even turn that into a pizza!

Option 3:

Rustic ciabatta rolls. Will they be the fluffiest ciabatta rolls you've ever had? Maybe. It depends on the state of your dough. Will it be a fun and new way to bake bread that you don't usually make? You betcha!