MAKE YOUR OWN SOURDOUGH PIZZA

Learn about sourdough while making a delicious meal.
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About the Activity
It’s pizza time! In this activity, kids will learn the science behind making sourdough crust. They will understand the important role of a sourdough starter, and how to take care of it through the feeding and discarding process. By the end, kids will get to see and taste their creation by making their own sourdough pizza!

Supplies
These simple materials will get you started.

• Large glass jar with a lid
• Mixing bowl
• Spoon

For the sourdough starter:
• Flour (preferably all-purpose flour)
• Warm water

For the pizza:
• ½ cups active sourdough starter
• 1 ½ cups of water
• ½ teaspoon of salt
• 4 cups of flour
• Tomato sauce
• Cheese for the topping
• Toppings of your choice (vegetables, meat, etc.)

Grades: K-12
Topic: Food Security, Agriculture
Time: One week for the starter, 90 minutes for the pizza
Activity Steps

Starting the Starter

1. The main ingredient to any sourdough bread is the starter, the bubbly mixture that helps the bread rise and gives it that unique flavor. Your starter will take at least one week before it’s ready to be used, and each day you will need to feed and discard the starter.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
A sourdough starter is how we cultivate the yeast in a form that we can use for baking. Since yeast is present in all flour, the easiest way to make a starter is simply by combining flour and water and letting it sit. Starters can be made from any type of flour. However, the type of flour used will make a difference in flavor and how it works in recipes.

2. The first step is to mix ½ cup of flour and ½ cup of warm water in the jar. The starter should be a smooth, pasty texture. Loosely place the lid on the jar and put the starter in a warm place, like a cupboard or cabinet for one day. Take a look at our sourdough starter guide to learn how to feed and discard your starter over the next week.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Over time, the starter develops yeast. The yeast gives off carbon dioxide gas, which forms bubbles in sourdough or any other yeast dough.

Caring for Your Starter

Like any tiny monster, your starter needs to be fed to stay alive! You’ll want to feed your starter a few times over the next week, starting three days after you first create it.

1. To feed, remove half of your starter into a separate container. The mixture that you remove is called the discard. In your original starter jar, add ½ cup of new flour and ½ cup of warm water, then mix together.

2. Check on your starter daily until it’s ready for baking in a week. Over time your starter will change in smell and texture!

3. Remember to save the discard you removed from your starter. It wasn’t ready for bread making, but you can refrigerate that mixture to make another baked good, or as a gift for a friend so they can do the same!

Making Your Pizza

1. Now it’s time to focus on the dough! Mix your starter, water, and salt together in a large bowl. Add your flour and mix until you get a dough ball. Place the dough into another bowl and let it sit for 30 minutes.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Yeast is a leavening agent for bread and what causes it to rise. It is a single-cell fungus that breaks down the starches in wheat flour, forming sugar. This is called fermentation!

2. Next, roll the dough out into four rounds. Let the dough rise again and start to prepare your toppings. Once the dough has risen, add tomato sauce with a spoon and then sprinkle cheese on top. If you want, you could add other toppings of your choice. Popular toppings are spinach, pepperoni, and olive oil. Some people even enjoy pineapples on their pizza!

**DID YOU KNOW?**
Sourdough is also a word for an Alaskan old-timer. This nickname comes from early Alaskans who spent the entire winter north of the Arctic Circle. They protected their sourdough during the coldest months by keeping it close to their body.

3. Now your pizza is ready to cook! Bake in the oven at 550 degrees for about 10 minutes. Once your pizza is done, let it cool for a few minutes, slice, and serve!
See how much you’ve learned about sourdough!

**QUESTION 1**
The carbon dioxide in yeast causes ___________ in the starter.
- a. Bubbles
- b. Steam
- c. Water
- d. Ice

**QUESTION 2**
Yeast is _________________.
- a. The leavening agent for bread
- b. Another word for dough
- c. A type of sauce
- d. A delicious pizza topping

**QUESTION 3**
Does a starter only work with white flour?
- a. Yes, only white flour
- b. No, starters can be made from any type of flour

**QUESTION 4**
What is the word used to describe a type of bread, but also an Alaskan older-timer?
- a. Flour
- b. Sourdough
- c. Wheat
- d. Dough

**Reflection Questions**

- How long did your starter take to get bubbly?
  What do you think causes the difference in time before it is ready to use?

- Could you tell the difference between sourdough pizza crust and “regular” pizza crust?
  What was the difference? Which do you prefer?

- How did it feel to put food on the table that you made from scratch?
  Did it taste any different than store-bought products?
Investigate & Explore

Take what you’ve learned to the next level to learn more and explore the possibilities.

Sourdough doesn’t have to be sour, and the term simply refers to any bread made from yeasts and bacteria. In fact, nearly all leavened bread in the world came from sourdough. For example, the French baguette, Chinese mantou, and the East African injera are all examples of sourdough breads that vary in taste and texture. The most famous sourdough is San Francisco sourdough, developed at Boudin bakery in 1849.

Bread isn’t the only baked good that can be made with your sourdough starter. The yeasty mixture could also make other baked goods like hot cakes, waffles, muffins and even cake! Try these other recipes the next time you want to experiment with sourdough.