

sheet pan pizza

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Sheet Pan Pizza

The rectangular pizzas — Sicilian, grandma, Detroit — are all sheet-pan pizzas, and they exist because the pan solves a problem no round pizza has to face. A thick, wet, high-hydration dough cannot be launched onto a stone; it needs a wall to rise against. Give it one and you get a different pizza entirely: tall, open-crumbed, and fried on the bottom rather than baked.

This is also the most forgiving home method by a distance. No peel, no launch, no stone to preheat for an hour, and the dough ferments in the pan it bakes in.

Part of [Baking](#). The vessel comparison is [oven pizza](#).

The pan insulates — so you fry the base

A sheet pan is the opposite of a baking steel. It is thin aluminium with air underneath, it takes time to come up to temperature, and being solid it traps every bit of steam the dough releases. Left alone, that produces a pale, damp bottom crust.

The fix is not more heat. It is **oil**. Two to four tablespoons in the pan turns the base into a shallow fry: the oil conducts heat into the dough far better than air does, it hits temperatures above boiling so the surface

actually browns, and it stops the trapped moisture from sitting against the crust. A properly oiled sheet-pan pizza has a base closer to a fried bread than a baked one — see [baking fats](#) and [cooking oils](#).

Two smaller levers:

- **Dark, anodised pans absorb radiant heat**; shiny aluminium reflects it. If your bases run pale and the pan is bright, that is why.
- **Bake on a low rack**, closest to the bottom element, and move up for the cheese at the end. [ovens and heat](#) covers rack position and hot spots.

The dough

Higher hydration than a round pizza, because the pan supports the slump and the open crumb is the point.

- **70–80% hydration**, bread flour. See [baker's percentages](#), [flour](#).
- **Cold ferment in the pan**, oiled and covered, overnight to three days. This is the whole convenience of the style — the dough proofs where it bakes.
- **Stretch in stages**. Wet dough fights back. Press it toward the corners, wait ten minutes, press again. Three rounds gets it to the edges without tearing.
- **Dimple it** with oiled fingertips before topping, the way you would focaccia — the dough here is functionally focaccia with toppings, which is why [flatbreads](#) is the closest neighbour page.

The three styles

Sicilian

Thick, square, generous crumb, sauce over cheese or cheese over sauce depending on whose grandmother. Full half-sheet, deep dough, 20–25 minutes.

Grandma

Thinner and quicker than Sicilian, pressed straight into an oiled pan with no second proof, sauce dolloped rather than spread, mozzarella under it. The weeknight version of the style.

Detroit

The one worth learning. Cheese is pushed **all the way to the pan wall**, where it hits the metal and caramelises into a lacy, crunchy edge — *frico*. Sauce goes on in stripes **after** baking, or in the last few minutes. Traditionally brick cheese in a blue-steel automotive parts pan; low-moisture mozzarella cut into cubes in a half sheet gets you most of the way. The frico edge is the reason to keep the pan un-lined at the sides — parchment on the base only, or none at all.

Timing and temperature

450–475°F (230–245°C) is the working band. Hotter than that and the deep dough's interior is still raw when the top is done; cooler and the base never fries. Expect 18–25 minutes depending on thickness, with the last 2–3 minutes on a higher rack or under the broiler to finish the cheese.

Doneness is a lift-and-look: slide a thin spatula under one corner and check the base is golden and stiff. Internal temperature is not a useful test here the way it is for [bread](#).

Recipes

Grandma pie (half sheet, 13×18 in / 33×46 cm)

500 g bread flour, 350 g water (70%), 10 g salt, 3 g instant yeast, 20 g olive oil. Mix, knead lightly, rest 30 minutes. Oil the pan with 3 tbsp olive oil, press the dough out in three stages, cover, and refrigerate overnight.

Next day, let it sit an hour at room temperature. Scatter 8 oz (225 g) shredded low-moisture mozzarella over the dough, then dollop 1 cup uncooked crushed tomato salted to taste over the cheese. Bake at 475°F (245°C) on the lowest rack for 18–20 minutes. Finish with grated parmesan, torn basil, and a drizzle of raw olive oil.

Detroit-style in a half sheet

Same dough, 75% hydration, cold-fermented two days in the oiled pan. Cut 10 oz (285 g) low-moisture mozzarella into ½-inch cubes and spread them edge to edge, pressing them against the pan walls. Bake at 500°F (260°C) for 12–15 minutes until the wall cheese is dark and crisp. Stripe the sauce over the top out of the oven. Run a knife around the frico edge before lifting.

Weeknight sheet pizza, no ferment

Use the [oven pizza](#) base dough, or 400 g flour / 260 g water / 8 g salt / 5 g instant yeast mixed and risen 90 minutes. Oil the pan, press out, top, bake 450°F (230°C) for 20 minutes. Not as good, and on the table in two hours.

Equipment

A commercial half sheet pan is the single most useful piece of bakeware in a domestic kitchen and costs less than a pizza stone. Quarter sheets make personal pizzas. Avoid non-stick here — the temperatures are above what most non-stick coatings are rated for, and oil plus bare aluminium releases fine anyway. See [baking equipment](#) and [Cookware](#).

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