



Which Crusts Work Best in Your Pizza Operation's Oven?





There are many types of pizza ovens, each with distinctive features that affect ingredient and dough performance, preparation speed, and overall taste of your pies. That means there are also specific dough and crust types that are more appropriate than others for each type of oven, too. Use this handy guide to determine the best crust for your pizza operation's oven!

Deck Oven

Deck ovens feature shelves where the pies are placed directly on preheated stones for baking. These ovens are popular with independent and specialty pizzeria operators because they provide authentic taste without a complex setup. The “Old World” care it takes to tend pies baking on stone shelves over radiant heat instead of forced air makes deck ovens the top choice for providing a time-honored pizza experience.



Brick or Wood-Fired Ovens

Made of brick or clay, these ovens house a coal- or wood-fueled open flame that reaches 600°-800° to rapidly cook pies. Gourmet chefs and skilled prep staff generally prefer a brick or wood-fired oven because of the finessed, Neapolitan techniques required to operate it, along with its upscale results, and unique flavor — wood provides a deep, smoky taste, while coal offers a more neutral taste, similar to that of a barbecue grill.

Conveyor Ovens

Conveyor ovens are common in the industry because of their versatility and ease of use. The pizza is pulled through a forced air cooking chamber on a chain conveyor belt, so training time is minimal and results are consistent.



Rapid Cook Ovens

This easy-to-operate oven combines forced air and top-and-bottom infrared heating so temperature and time settings can be adjusted to emulate the look and final bake of the other ovens. Screens and stones are often used to ensure proper air movement and the quick, uniform bake of the outer edges, toppings, and cheese. Rapid cook ovens can also accommodate foods like sandwiches or appetizers, increasing menu flexibility without adding extensive labor.

Conventional (Home) Ovens

The necessity for and popularity of take 'n' bake pizza, pizza kits, and frozen pizza programs continue to rise. Pies that final bake in conventional (home) ovens are a must-have — as is labeling with appropriate baking instructions.



Pizza Ovens At-A-Glance

To help you make sense of all the factors we've discussed, here's a breakdown of how each oven type affects the characteristics of your pizza and your operation.

OVEN TYPE	AFFECT ON PIES	SPACE NEEDED	BEST FOR	SUGGESTED ALIVE & KICKIN' PRODUCTS
Deck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crust color: rich, brown underside and lighter edge Crust texture: crispy bottom and satisfying, chewy pull Crusts blister without burning and do not affect the cheese's lightly baked color 	Moderate; decks are stacked vertically to minimize oven footprint	Concepts fashioned around New York style pies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High gluten dough balls New York Style dough balls Custom recipe dough balls Lightly flavored dough balls (sour, garlic, herb)
Brick/Wood-fired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crust color: light golden brown with intermittent deeper browning Crust texture: among the crispiest available when baking is done directly on the deck Crusts that significantly bubble and blister for enhanced visual appeal 	Varies; usually larger ovens that are custom-built to fit a specific space or designed to add customer appeal	Upscale restaurants with skilled chefs; perfect for "gourmet" pies, Neapolitan, or New York style pie crusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neapolitan dough balls New York Style dough balls for high heat ovens Custom recipe dough balls
Conveyor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crust color: evenly brown with a darker bottom Crust texture: not quite as crisp as pies prepared in deck ovens, but more pull and chew than convection oven crusts Crusts are evenly baked with some blistering 	Large; 150-330 cubic foot minimum space requirements to accommodate entrance/exit conveyor belts and simultaneous side-by-side pie baking	QSRs, delivery-focused pizzerias, and non-traditional venues like athletic stadiums using dough balls, self-rising, or par-baked crusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Par-baked crusts Self-rising crusts Thin and crispy crusts All dough balls except Neapolitan and New York Style for high heat ovens Custom recipe dough balls
Rapid Cook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These ovens bake pies quickly and evenly. They are known for their versatility and customizable settings 	Small; combines the benefits of a pizza oven and microwave into a single, compact piece of equipment	Non-traditional locations or in operations where pizza is a secondary product; par-baked crusts with use of a pizza screen; dough balls and self-rising crusts with use of a pizza stone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Par-baked crusts Self-rising crusts Thin and crispy crusts Neapolitan and New York Style dough balls for high heat ovens Custom recipe dough balls
Conventional (Home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crust color is evenly brown, sometimes with a darker bottom, depending on accuracy of oven calibration and time baked Crust texture varies depending on the crust type and number of toppings Crusts offer versatility and ease of preparation for operators and home cooks 	Home kitchen	Pizzas made for at-home baking using any par-baked crusts or dough balls with the exception of Neapolitan and New York Style for high heat ovens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Par-baked crusts Self-rising crusts Thin and crispy crusts Neapolitan and New York Style dough balls for high heat ovens Custom recipe dough balls

Pizza Toppings Portions Guide: All Oven Types*

*For Brick/Wood-Fired and High Heat Ovens, follow "Light" recommendations to ensure proper baking

Pizza Size	6"			12"			14"			16"			18"		
Toppings - Oz. (Light/Medium/ Heavy)	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
Pizza Sauce	0.75	1.25	1.75	3.00	4.00	5.00	3.75	5.75	7.50	4.75	7.00	9.00	6.00	8.25	10.25
Cheese	1.00	1.25	1.75	4.00	6.00	7.50	5.75	7.00	9.25	7.25	10.50	14.00	7.50	12.00	15.50
Pepperoni	0.25	0.33	0.50	1.00	1.25	1.75	1.25	1.75	2.50	1.50	2.50	3.00	2.00	3.00	4.00
Sausage (Cooked)	0.75	1.00	1.50	3.00	4.50	5.75	4.00	6.00	8.00	5.25	7.75	10.50	6.50	10.00	13.25
Mushrooms (Fresh Sliced)	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.75	2.75	1.50	2.75	3.75	1.75	2.75	4.75	2.75	4.75	7.50
Mushrooms (Canned)	0.75	1.25	1.75	1.50	3.00	4.50	2.25	4.50	7.25	4.25	6.00	8.50	4.75	7.25	11.00
Onions	0.50	1.00	1.50	1.75	2.75	4.25	2.50	4.00	5.25	3.25	5.75	7.50	4.75	8.00	11.50
Peppers	0.50	1.00	1.50	1.75	2.75	4.25	2.50	4.00	5.25	3.25	5.75	7.50	4.75	8.00	11.50
Olives (Sliced)	0.50	1.00	1.50	1.75	2.75	4.25	2.50	4.00	5.25	3.25	5.75	7.50	4.75	8.00	11.50
Bacon	0.25	0.50	1.00	1.50	2.50	3.50	1.75	3.50	4.25	2.25	4.25	6.25	3.25	6.00	7.50
Canadian Bacon	0.25	0.33	0.50	1.00	1.25	1.75	1.25	1.75	2.50	1.50	2.50	3.00	2.00	3.00	4.00
Pineapple	0.50	1.00	1.25	2.00	3.50	5.25	2.50	4.00	6.00	3.00	5.50	8.25	3.50	6.25	10.50
Banana Peppers	0.75	1.00	1.25	2.00	3.00	4.50	2.50	3.50	5.00	2.50	4.75	7.00	2.75	5.25	8.25

These insights about the different types of pizza ovens and products may compel you to add a new crust type and/or pizza style to your lineup.

Contact your distributor and ask for the Alive & Kickin' products best suited for your oven today!

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