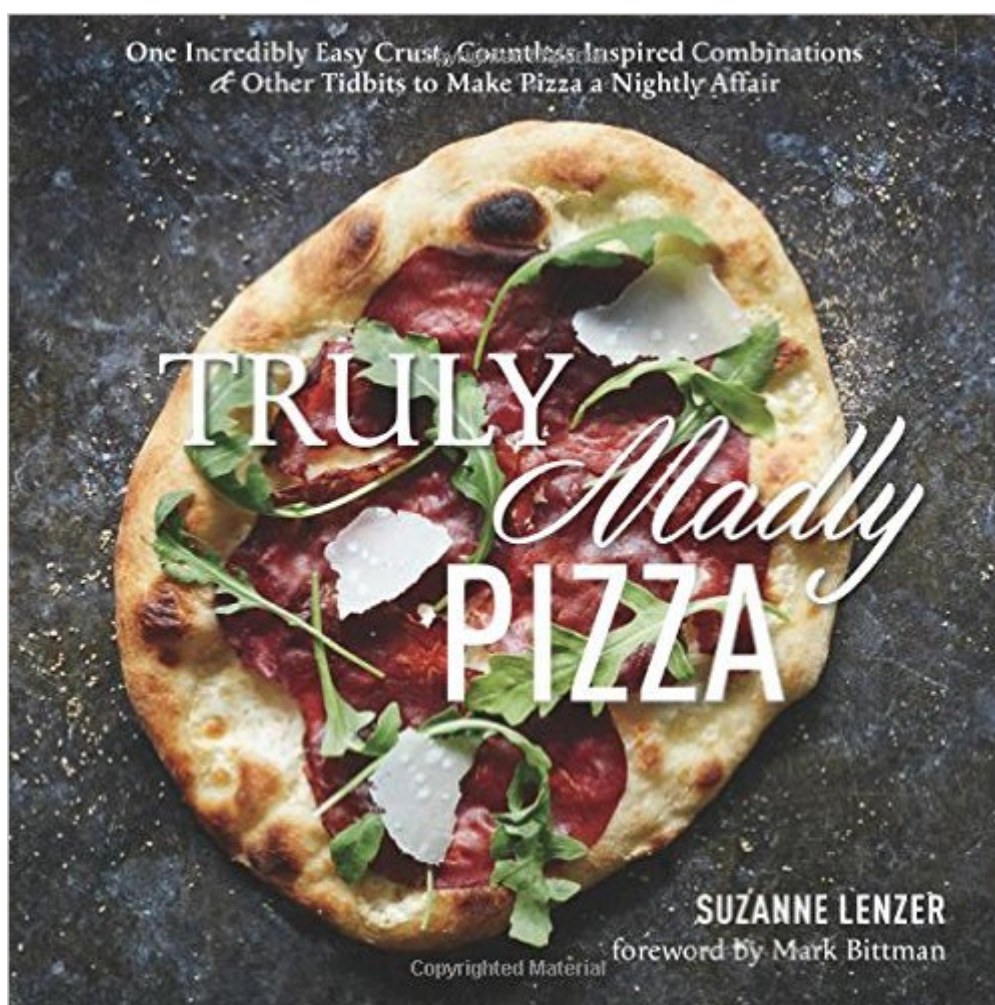


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# Truly Madly Pizza: One Incredibly Easy Crust, Countless Inspired Combinations & Other Tidbits To Make Pizza A Nightly Affair



## Synopsis

No matter what the first day of a new week throws at you, no matter how looming the rest of the days before the weekend seem, a truly, madly delicious pizza promises something familiar, something reliable, something known. It's confirmation that all the heaviness of the world will be held at bay if only for a little while by a combination of bubbling mozzarella, sweet fennel sausage, and balsamic-glazed radicchio. Beginning with the "Mother Crust" recipe, Lenzer argues that pizza dough is a tabula rasa for whatever healthy fresh ingredients you have on hand. To make pizza a nightly affair, she suggests preparing the dough on Sunday in less than 30 minutes freezing it, and simply transferring it to the fridge to thaw on the morning you plan to cook. Lenzer gives the timestrapped home cook countless combinations for a healthy, delicious (and quick!) weeknight meal. Balancing lighter healthy alternatives like Summer Squash with Lemon Zest and Ricotta with indulgent options such as Spicy Shredded Pork with Sweet Onion Jam and Burrata, in addition to bonus recipes including "Salad thoughts," "Small bites," and even a few ideas about wine, this book covers all the bases. Lenzer's comforting voice adds a homey touch to her artisanal recipes and immaculately styled photos.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Her crust recipe seemed too simple to be good, but the flavor is excellent and texture fine too. I didn't believe mixing the yeast in dry and using a food processor would be acceptable, but it works! I'm ordering another book as a gift now. And I have 2 dough batches in the freezer to try her directions on that too. I don't usually like refrigerated doughs, but this one is good. I'm not throwing away my old dough recipes, but they aren't going to be used on busy days, and as I've aged

manipulating stiff pizza dough even w/ mixer assist has gotten to be a chore (don't believe that arthritis commercial where Italian lady suddenly can function in kitchen w/ an OTC pill). This recipe allows making good pizza dough when people drop by. And the toppings, they are good, but really it's the dough!

This is a great book with innovative recipes that my family has had fun trying (only a few so far, but working through additional ones each week). I have one picky eater who has been pleasantly surprised by them (she's typically a cheese pizza eater). I like that the recipes only call for a few ingredients, and there are some base recipes for sauces/spreads that are used by more than one recipe, which can be frozen in small batches for use later on. The ingredients are often a bit more exotic than the local pizza shop fare - which adds to their appeal for me - and I haven't had any trouble sourcing them from our small local grocery store. Lastly, I have to give cudos to Suzanne Lenzer for emailing back and forth with me when I reached out to her with a question on modifying her pizza dough recipe to fit my kitchen's equipment and available ingredients. I imagine she is a very busy person, as we all are, and the fact that she took such an interest in helping me get the recipe 'just right' really touched me.

I enjoy cooking and am fairly good at it, but I had never tried baking a homemade pizza. Until now. Mine came out perfect! The crust had just the right amount of char and the flavors were so delicious because I pulled my pie piping hot out of the oven. Burned the roof of my mouth a little, but I just couldn't stop myself, it was that good. I'm a pizza lover, and--surprise!--my first attempt at making my own may just be the best I've ever had. As good as the pizza is, however, there is another compelling reason to get this cookbook. I like to read cookbooks with a narrative, and the stories in this one are delicious too. You get a real sense of who Suzanne Lenzer is and she sounds like someone you'd really like to know. In fact, you'll probably wish you knew her well enough to drop by her apartment in New York on "pizza night" to share a few slices, a simple salad, some good wine, and a few stories with her and her husband Ken. A friend gave me Truly Madly Pizza as a gift, and I'll be passing on the favor by making it a gift to other friends.

Pizza as light, healthy food? Pizza that is easy-to-make-at-home yet upscale and gourmet? You bet. There is a new cookbook that delivers all this in 240 gorgeous pages. Suzanne Lenzer has been working behind the scenes for years with Mark Bittman at the New York Times and with various food magazines. "Truly Madly Pizza" is her first solo cookbook and it is terrific. As mentioned, the

photography in this book is gorgeous. Suzanne not only is a professionally trained chef but also a food stylist and the images throughout the book are mouth watering and luscious. Unlike some cookbooks that present cuisine in a pretentious and lofty manner, these images illustrate down-to-earth, simple, wholesome food. Every ingredient is essential and allowed to shine just as it should in the food. And the food is divine. Unlike some pizzas that end up more like casseroles, Lenzer has stripped the recipes down to the minimal essentials. This keeps the pizzas light, healthy and fresh. Her pizza recipes often follow a three-flavor profile such as "Pancetta with shaved brussels sprouts and teleggio", "Pears, maple-glazed pecans and pecorino" or "Summer squash with lemon zest and ricotta". By simplifying the recipes to 3-4 toppings, each ingredient is essential and offers balance. For example, in "Broccoli rabe, soppressata and an egg" we see how the bitter earthy greens balance the sweet rich egg and the salty meat. Her dough recipe is not complicated either. Unlike some authors who dictate specific countries for flour and mandate long fermentation periods for the dough, Ms. Lenzer is more relaxed in her approach. I suspect this is intended to be non-threatening to home cooks unfamiliar with the craft of the pizzaiolo. When you read the text she certainly recommends using weights instead of volume for measuring ingredients and allowing the dough time to fully develop, but the master dough recipe does not come across as pedantic. For all her efforts to keep things easy, I was surprised she did not emphasize the no-knead/autolyze approach to dough development which favors allowing the dough to sit instead of kneading by hand or with a machine. Perhaps she wants to appeal to the time conscious cook who doesn't want to wait so long for the dough. The dough recipe can be described as thin crust neo-neopolitan as it includes olive oil (unlike neopolitan pizza which usually does not have olive oil) and a fairly stiff 60% hydration. To make pizzas a regular event at home, she even recommends freezing the dough balls for a quick weeknight meal. These are not traditional pizzas. With combinations like "Old bay shrimp, pickled red onions, sweet corn and heirloom tomatoes" or "Curried cauliflower with tomatoes and cilantro" we know these pairings are the result of many tests and sleepless nights thinking of how to balance one ingredient off another. You won't find these pairings in any other pizza cookbook that I know of. The book is divided into eight main sections: "Pizza dough", "Sauces, spreads and smears", "Fruit and vegetable pizzas", "Charcuterie and meat pizzas", "Poultry and seafood pizzas", "Sticks and other snacks", "Salad thoughts" and "Master recipes". While all the pizza sections are excellent, the snacks and salads should not be overlooked. In typical Mediterranean fashion, these parts of the meal are simple, elegant and understated. "Marinated gigante beans" is a good example of this; these are nothing more than large creamy flat beans marinated in olive oil, lemon and herbs. I sometimes kick myself that it takes a cookbook author to

remind me that great cooking can be this simple. In this same vein, recipes like "Grilled peaches with prosciutto and mint" or "Endive, celery, apple and fennel salad" really shine for both their tastiness and simplicity. If I had a complaint about this book, it would be the lack of more photos. Each of the 40 color photos is so rich and inviting, we are left wanting more. Many recipes exist in text only and it would be helpful to see how they look in finished form. Case in point: some people may not be familiar with 2/3 of the toppings in "Peaches, bresaola and burrata" and certainly unfamiliar with how peaches might look on a pizza. That said, there is not a photo in the book that disappoints. While not an encyclopedic book on pizza, this is the best cookbook I have seen on the fresh California style pizzas first popularized by Ed LaDou, Alice Waters and Wolfgang Puck. Ms. Lenzer has brought her own vision for where this style can go in a book well balanced between offering meat and vegetarian pizzas, salads and snacks. Her warm, funny voice remains encouraging and innovative and this book will be treasured by both novice and experienced cooks alike.

this book has been my undoing. i never needed another all consuming hobby. but now i have another. pizza. truly madly pizza. since i purchased this book several months ago i have probably made 80 pizzas. started with the flour recommended in the book and then found others. i have experimented with different cheeses, meats, olive oils, salts, and a zillion different toppings. the book is fantastic. it is a wonderful book for someone like me who would never consider himself a cook or chef or whatever. i keep going back to it time and time again. making several batches of dough and freezing them has been an eye opener. works like a charm. thanks for another hobby

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