

# Bake Oven Information and Instructions

Reserve the oven by contacting the manager of the Community Center

## **Tools** (provided):

A stick with a rag attached to wipe the hearth

Rake for ashes and to push fire to back of oven

Wooden cover for the opening when oven is cooled down to protect interior

Metal cover for the opening to conserve the heat between pizzas.

Wooden peels for making pizza and putting into oven

Metal peel for removing pizza

Pizza pans

Pizza cutter

Gloves for hot work

Can for ashes and remnants from previous fire.

## **Wood** (you need to provide):

Newspaper, kindling (soft wood works well), and firewood (hardwood). Pieces of hardwood 3-4" in diameter work best. If you have larger pieces of wood, you will need to split them up.

***Under no circumstances should pressure-treated, painted, stained or wood with a finish be used. Additionally do not use any wood that has glue in it such as plywood, particleboard, etc.***

Make sure that all nails, screws and other fasteners are removed from your wood.

**The bottom line: only natural, unadulterated wood can be used.**

## **Build the Fire:**

Clean out the ashes from the previous fire. Remember the base of the oven is made of clay, so be gentle as you use the rake and/or a piece of wood to pull the ashes to the front and into the ash can. Begin fire prep in the front of the oven, using newspaper and kindling. Prop the newspaper and kindling up to allow air to move under the fuel, like a tunnel. Lay materials from front to back. Light it in the front, and once fire is lit, use gloves to add additional wood. Once the fire gets hot, the wood will burn more efficiently. If the wind is blowing directly into the fire, it may be more challenging to keep the fire going, initially. Be patient with the process, as it is worth it in the end. The smoke will come out the top of the oven opening. As the fire gets hotter, the amount of smoke will be reduced.

Preheat time is about 2 – 2.5 hours for baking pizza, and 3 hours for baking bread. The **interior clay of the oven will turn white when the oven is hot enough.** Push the fire towards the back of the oven, and wipe the baking surface with the wet rag (attached to a stick) provided.

## **Making Pizza**

Form the pizza onto a pizza pan or roll it on a mat. If you are making many crusts, you can put them on waxed paper that has cornmeal on it, and stack the crusts. **Prepare individual pizzas on a wooden peel.** When you are ready, put cornmeal on the wooden peel, place the crust on the peel and add toppings. Keep the crust thin, and sauce away from the edge. Note: you need enough cornmeal to enable the pizza to easily slide off the peel.

**You only use the wooden peel to prep and insert the pizza into the oven.** Bring the peel to the oven, give a quick push with the peel, and the pizza should slide right off onto the oven floor. (You are baking the pizza right on the oven floor.)

**Use the metal peel to “work” (turn) the pizza to cook it evenly, and remove it from the oven.** The pizza is ready to be removed when the toppings look cooked, the cheese melted, and the crust has risen and is

browned. The cooking should only take a minute or two. As the oven cools, it will take longer to cook the pizza.

Wipe the oven floor if soiled with the damp rag on the stick.

### Things to remember:

The oven is made only of clay so be gentle when using the rake or other tools inside the oven.

Use the gloves, as the oven gets very hot.

Clean up so the oven is ready for the next person. **For safety's sake, the only thing you will leave are the ashes, because they should be cold before being removed.**

### Things you need to bring:

Trash bag

Paper towels

Plates

Dough

Toppings

Rolling pin if you plan on rolling the crusts out

Cornmeal (necessary for preventing the pizza from sticking to the peel)

Flour (to work dough)

Premade crusts can be used but they should be kept cold so they will not rise while you are preparing them.

Have fun! Remember you will learn as you go and there are people who can help you.

Two recipes that we have found work:

"Pizza Dough" from Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything* (J. Wiley and Sons, 2008).

Modified by Helen Mango

3 c Flour

2 t Instant yeast

2 t Salt

2 T Olive oil

1 c water (or a little more)

Combine flour, yeast and salt in the bowl of a food processor. Turn the machine on and add the water and olive oil through the feed tube. Process for about 30 seconds, adding more water if necessary to form a slightly sticky ball of dough. Turn dough onto a floured surface and knead a few seconds to form a smooth, round dough ball. Put into a greased bowl and cover. Let rise until doubled in size, 1-2 hours. Punch down and knead briefly and let it rise another hour or two.

"Pizza Caccia Nanza" from James Beard's *Beard on Bread*, (Knopf, 1995)

Modified by Weezie Scott

1 ¼ c Wheat flour

1 ¼ c White flour

1 t Salt

1 T Dry yeast

1 c Warm water

2 or 3 Chopped garlic

2 T Rosemary

2 T Oregano

3 T Olive Oil

Mix wheat and white flour. Put 1 ½ cups of the mixed flour into the bowl. Make a well in the center and pour water in. Sprinkle the yeast and salt over the water and a very little pinch of sugar. Wait a bit to proof, then stir into the sponge. Add garlic, oil, and then the herbs and more flour. Keep beating the sponge until you need to knead the dough. Knead until done. Put into a bowl in a warm spot with a little olive oil drizzled over the top. Let the dough rise. Punch down and start your pizzas.