



ITALIAN · NEAPOLITAN · KAMADO APPLICATION · MAIN · PARTY CENTERPIECE ·
OUTDOOR COOK

Pizza on the Kamado (Neapolitan-Style, 90-Second Bake)

Five hundred grams of Caputo 00 flour, forty-eight hours of cold fermentation, a pizza stone sitting on heat deflector legs at three hundred fifty degrees Celsius, and ninety seconds of violent heat. The kamado becomes a wood-fired Neapolitan oven — charred cornicione, leopard-spotted bottom, molten interior, with subtle smoke from the lump charcoal. The home equivalent of a brick-oven pizzeria.

Protein Variable by topping (traditional margherita = none)

Serves 4-6 guests (one dough batch = 4 × 280 g balls = 4 pizzas)

Difficulty Advanced

Active 20 min dough mix + 15 min shape-and-bake per pizza

Total 48-72 hours total (almost all cold ferment, hands-off)

THE STORY

The Kamado as Pizza Oven

Home ovens cap at roughly 260 degrees Celsius on their highest setting. Neapolitan pizza needs 420–450 degrees Celsius to cook in 60–90 seconds, producing the charred, blistered, puffy cornicione and the leopard-spotted underbelly that define the style. For decades, home cooks who wanted real Neapolitan pizza had three options: buy a \$6,000 wood-fired oven, eat at a restaurant, or accept a compromise from the home oven.

The kamado changes that equation. The ceramic mass reaches 350–370 degrees Celsius easily (with proper fuel loading and vent management), which approaches the lower end of wood-fired oven temperatures. More importantly, the kamado's geometry creates the same

three-way heat transfer that a wood-fired oven creates: floor radiation from the stone, dome radiation from the ceramic, and convective heat from the charcoal combustion. A pizza stone on heat deflector legs at 350 degrees with lump charcoal below produces pizzas that are substantially better than any home oven can produce — and within recognizable range of proper Neapolitan pizzeria output.

This recipe is specifically designed around Pablo's kamado. It is not a generic pizza recipe that happens to work on a kamado; it is a kamado-first pizza recipe. The dough is a 48–72 hour cold ferment (slower than Italian weeknight pizza, producing deeper flavor and better digestibility — the Tartine approach applied to pizza). The topping guidance is tuned for 90-second bakes (too much topping turns the pizza into a soup; restraint is mandatory). The setup protocol is kamado-specific (stone on deflector legs-up, target temp, preheat time). The two-tier variants cover classical Margherita (the DOC-equivalent classical reference) and Pablo-Spanish (jamón + pimentón + manchego + honey — the avant-garde Spanish-Italian fusion that the weekly tapa board loves).

The sourdough-discard variant uses Pablo's weekly ~350 g of discard, turning a byproduct into Friday-night pizza. Three breads, one starter cycle, zero waste.

AT A GLANCE

Specs

YIELD 4 × 280 g dough balls / 4 pizzas	FLOUR 00 flour (Caputo preferred)	HYDRATION 65% (325 g water / 500 g flour)	DIFFICULTY Advanced ●●●●○
COLD FERMENT 48-72 h refrigerated	TARGET KAMADO TEMP 320-370 °C / 610-700 °F	BAKE TIME 90-180 sec per pizza	MAKE-AHEAD Dough 48-72 h refrigerated, same-day bake
CARDINAL RULE Topping restraint — less is more	FINAL SIGNAL Leopard spots + charred cornicione		

What Changed & Why

Classical Neapolitan pizza (Vera Pizza Napoletana DOC) uses same-day dough, 8–12 hour ferment, 420–450 °C wood-fired oven, 60–90 second bake. This Umami adaptation is kamado-specific: 48–72 hour cold ferment (slower but more flavorful), 320–370 °C target (kamado realistic max), 90–180 second bake. The ● Everyday version uses commercial yeast and accessible-supermarket toppings (Margherita + basic meats). The ● No Limits version uses Pablo's active sourdough discard (weekly rotation with UMAMI-10 #1 + #2) and premium Spanish-Italian fusion toppings (jamón Ibérico + pimentón-infused EVOO + buffalo mozzarella + Manchego finish). Same dough technique, same kamado setup, topping elevation is where ● shows.

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
TECH	Home oven at 260 °C, 7–10 min bake	Kamado at 350 °C, 90–180 sec bake	Kamado reaches wood-fired-oven temperature range; 90-second bake produces proper Neapolitan texture
TECH	Same-day dough (8–12 h ferment)	48–72 h cold ferment in refrigerator	Long cold ferment produces 3–4x more flavor compounds + better digestibility (gluten breakdown by enzymes)
ADD	—	Kamado-specific setup: stone on deflector legs-up	Creates air gap between deflector and stone; stone radiates bottom heat while dome radiates top — three-way heat transfer matches wood-fired oven geometry
SUB	Bread flour / all-purpose	Caputo 00 flour (Italian, fine grind, moderate protein)	Produces the tender, extensible, puffy cornicione that defines Neapolitan texture; American flours are too strong and produce denser results

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
ELEV	Same-day service	Sourdough discard variant (●) + weekly starter rotation	Uses Pablo's active mother; integrates with sourdough loaf + focaccia weekly cycle; zero-waste starter management

What You Need

● Everyday

The Neapolitan Base Dough (● — Commercial Yeast)

- 500 g Caputo 00 flour 'Pizzeria' (standard Italian import — available at good grocery and specialty Italian shops; substitute: bread flour)
- 325 g cool water (65% hydration — room temp, not warm, because we want slow ferment)
- 10 g fine sea salt
- 3 g instant dry yeast (small amount — the long ferment does the work)
- Optional: 10 g EVOO (classical Neapolitan omits oil; Roman-style adds it; both approaches work)

The Classical Margherita Toppings (per pizza)

- 80 g San Marzano tomatoes, crushed BY HAND (not blended — hand-crushing preserves texture)
- 80 g fresh mozzarella (fior di latte or buffalo), sliced 5 mm thick and drained on paper towels 30 min beforehand
- 4–5 fresh basil leaves
- 1 tsp Arbequina EVOO, drizzled after bake
- Pinch of fine sea salt on the tomatoes before bake

Substitution Notes

- *No 00 flour?* Bread flour (12–13% protein) works but produces a slightly chewier crust. Do NOT use all-purpose (too low protein) or cake flour (way too low protein).
- *No heat deflector / pizza stone?* The kamado WITHOUT these accessories cannot approximate Neapolitan heat transfer. You need both. Alternative: cook in home oven at max temp (roughly 260 °C) on a preheated baking steel or stone for 7–10 min — different style, still good.
- *No fresh mozzarella?* Low-moisture mozzarella works for topping variants but fails the Margherita test. For real Margherita, fresh is non-negotiable; drain on paper towels to reduce water content and prevent a soggy pizza.
- *San Marzano tomatoes unavailable?* Any high-quality canned plum tomatoes work. Do NOT use tomato paste (too concentrated) or fresh tomatoes (too watery for 90-second bake). If using generic canned crushed, taste first — some are too sweet.

● No Limits

Sourdough Discard Dough (● — Pablo's Active Mother)

- 500 g Caputo 00 flour 'Pizzeria' DOP — preferred OR Flour & Weirdoughs bread blend (Pablo ✓)
- 100 g active sourdough discard (Pablo ✓ mother, 4-6 hours after last feed)
- 275 g cool filtered water (hydration adjusted for discard water content — total still 65%)
- 2 g instant dry yeast (insurance — ensures rise timing predictability when using discard)
- 12 g Maldon fine sea salt (Pablo ✓)
- Optional: 15 g Arbequina EVOO

Pablo-Spanish Margherita Variant

- 80 g premium Italian passata OR hand-crushed San Marzano DOP (Regalis Foods ✓ if stocking premium)
- 80 g fresh buffalo mozzarella (Salvatore brand at any Italian specialty), drained 30 min on paper towels
- 6-8 thin slices jamón Ibérico (Chèvre Miami ✓), DRAPED ON after bake (never baked — heat destroys the texture)
- 5 g aged Manchego, shaved with vegetable peeler, scattered after bake
- 5 fresh basil leaves, torn by hand
- 1 tsp Arbequina EVOO infused with pimentón de la Vera dulce (steep 1/4 tsp pimentón in warm EVOO for 30 min, strain)
- 1 tsp raw honey (Florida wildflower preferred), drizzled micro-amount at finish — signature sweet-salty move
- Maldon flaky salt at finish

Classical Margherita DOC (● reference)

- 80 g San Marzano dell'Agro Sarnese-Nocerino DOP (the certified tomatoes — Regalis Foods ✓)
- 80 g Mozzarella di Bufala Campana DOP (buffalo, not cow — the classical reference)
- 5 basil leaves (genovese basil DOP for purists)
- 1 tsp Monte Vulture DOP EVOO (southern Italian, classical Campania region)
- Maldon flaky salt at finish

Kamado Setup — Non-Negotiable

- Heat deflector (the ceramic plate that normally goes flat for indirect cooking) — positioned LEGS-UP to create spacer

- Pizza stone (cordierite preferred over marble — cordierite tolerates thermal shock better) — placed on top of the deflector legs
- Lump charcoal (enough to fill firebox 1/2 full for 350 °C target — roughly 3–4 kg)
- One fist-sized piece of kamado-safe wood (apple, cherry — subtle, not aggressive like hickory)
- Preheat time: 30–45 minutes to reach and stabilize at 350 °C
- Wooden pizza peel for launch + metal peel for turn/retrieve
- Infrared thermometer (handheld — essential for verifying stone surface temp, which should match pit temp ± 20 °C)

EQUIPMENT

Your Kit

- Kamado grill (Pablo ✓)
- Heat deflector (kamado accessory — positioned LEGS-UP)
- Pizza stone, cordierite preferred (thermal shock tolerance)
- Wooden pizza peel (for launch — semolina dust prevents sticking)
- Metal pizza peel (for turn and retrieve — thinner than wood)
- Infrared thermometer (handheld, laser — essential for stone surface temp verification)
- Large mixing bowl (3 L or larger)
- Kitchen scale (hydration-based dough needs grams)
- Bench scraper
- Lump charcoal (Pablo ✓ — enough for 3–4 kg fill)
- One fist-sized piece of apple or cherry wood
- Welder-grade or heat-resistant gloves
- Bench space for shaping dough balls

MISE EN PLACE

Before You Start

- Dough balls: made 48–72 hours in advance, refrigerated in individual sealed containers (one per pizza)

- Pulled from fridge 2 hours before bake to come to room temperature

- Toppings staged: tomatoes hand-crushed, mozzarella sliced and draining on paper towels (30 min minimum), basil washed and torn, EVOO ready, salt in small dish

- Kamado lit 45 min before first pizza: fill firebox 1/2 full with lump, add one piece of apple wood, light with electric starter or chimney, let the kamado rise to 350 °C with heat deflector (legs-up) + pizza stone already in position

- Flour or semolina dust ready at shaping station (prevents dough sticking to peel)

- Guests positioned near kamado — part of the experience, not a preamble

- A cold glass of Italian lager (Peroni or Menabrea) for the cook

MAKE-AHEAD

Timeline

- **T-48 to T-72 h – Mix dough**

Whisk 500 g flour + 3 g yeast in large bowl. Add 325 g cool water. Stir to shaggy mass. Rest 15 min (autolyse). Add 10 g salt (and 10 g EVOO if using). Mix to combine. Cover.
- **T-47 h – Bulk ferment start**

Four stretch-and-folds, 30 min apart (2 hours total). The dough will become smoother and more elastic with each fold. After the last fold, divide into 4 × 280 g portions. Shape each into a tight ball. Place each ball in its own sealed container (oiled). Refrigerate.
- **T-45 h to T-3 h – Cold ferment**

Refrigerator at 4 °C for 48–72 hours. Do not disturb. The dough will expand, develop flavor, and become highly extensible. Longer ferment (72 h) produces more flavor; shorter (48 h) is still excellent.

T-2 h – Room temp warm-up

Pull dough balls from fridge. Let them come to room temperature for 2 hours, still in their sealed containers. Cold dough is impossible to stretch; warm dough extends beautifully.

T-45 min – Light kamado

Fill firebox 1/2 full with lump charcoal. Place one fist-sized piece of apple wood on top. Electric starter OR chimney starter to light. Do NOT use lighter fluid (never, ever). Install heat deflector LEGS-UP. Place pizza stone on top of deflector legs. Close dome, set vents to reach 350 °C target.

T-20 min – Verify stone temp

Use infrared thermometer to measure stone surface temp. Target: 320–370 °C. If below, wait longer. If above 400 °C, crack vents open to cool. The stone temp MUST be in range before first pizza goes on.

T-5 min – Shape pizza #1

Dust bench with 00 flour or semolina. Gently press one dough ball from center outward, leaving a 1 cm cornicione rim untouched. Stretch by hand, rotating and letting gravity help. Target: 28–30 cm diameter. Do NOT use a rolling pin – it destroys the cornicione.

T-2 min – Top pizza

Transfer stretched dough to a well-floured wooden peel. WORK FAST (dough sticks to peel in minutes). Spoon 80 g tomato in center, spiral outward to within 2 cm of edge. Drain mozzarella slices one more time on paper towels, scatter across the pizza. Drizzle a micro amount of EVOO. Salt the tomatoes. Basil AFTER bake (fresh basil incinerates at kamado temps).

T-0 – Launch

Open kamado dome slowly (5 cm first = burp – prevents flashback). Slide pizza from peel onto stone with a quick jerk-and-pull motion. Close dome immediately. Start 90-second timer.

T+45 sec – Check, rotate

Open dome slowly (burp again). Using metal peel, rotate pizza 180° for even cooking. Close dome.

T+90 sec – Assess

Open dome. Check: is cornicione puffed and charred? Is bottom leopard-spotted (brown patches)? If YES → retrieve. If NO → give it another 30–60 sec.

T+90-180 sec – Retrieve

Use metal peel to slide pizza off stone. Transfer to wooden board or plate. Immediately add: torn fresh basil, a final drizzle of EVOO, Maldon flaky salt, any ● finish toppings (jamón Ibérico, shaved Manchego, honey drizzle).

T+90-120 sec – Service

Let pizza rest 60 seconds (the fresh mozzarella is molten and will burn mouths). Cut into 6 slices with rocker knife or pizza wheel. Serve immediately. Start shaping pizza #2 while the first is eaten.

METHOD

The Cook

1 The Dough — 48-72 Hour Cold Ferment

1. In a large bowl, whisk 500 g of 00 flour and 3 g of instant yeast until evenly distributed.
2. Add 325 g of cool water (room temperature, not warm — we want slow ferment, not fast). Stir with a wooden spoon or clean hand until there are no dry spots. The dough will be shaggy and somewhat sticky.
3. Rest 15 minutes (autolyse).
4. Add 10 g salt (and optional 10 g EVOO). Mix for 2–3 minutes to fully incorporate. The dough will feel wetter again — this is the gluten hydrating.
5. Over the next 2 hours, do 4 sets of stretch-and-folds, 30 minutes apart. Same technique as focaccia: wet hand, grab one side, stretch up, fold over, rotate bowl 90°, repeat 4x per set.
6. After the final fold, divide the dough into 4 equal portions (280 g each — weigh with a scale).
7. Shape each portion into a tight ball: pull edges down and under, creating surface tension on top. A dough ball should be visibly taut on the surface.
8. Place each ball in its own sealed container, lightly oiled. Refrigerate for 48–72 hours. 72 hours is better if you have the time.

WHY THIS WORKS

The 48–72 hour cold ferment is not optional for great pizza — it is the technique. At refrigerator temperature (4 °C), yeast activity slows dramatically but does not stop. Meanwhile, flour enzymes (amylase, protease) work at full speed, breaking starches into simple sugars and proteins into amino acids. These become flavor precursors that develop into complex aromatic compounds during the 90–second bake. Lab studies consistently show that 48–72 hour cold-fermented pizza dough produces 3–4 times more volatile flavor compounds than same-day dough. Beyond flavor, the extended ferment also improves digestibility — the gluten is partially broken down by the proteases, making the finished pizza easier on the stomach. This is why serious pizzerias (Pepe's, Una Pizza Napoletana, Pizzeria Bianco) all cold-ferment for 48–72+ hours. Reference: Bread and Baking chapter 4 (Cold Ferment); Kamado Mastery chapter 7 (Pizza).

2

Kamado Setup — Three-Way Heat Transfer

1. Light the kamado with enough lump charcoal to fill the firebox halfway (roughly 3–4 kg). This provides sustained heat for 4–6 pizzas plus some thermal mass.
2. Place one fist-sized piece of apple or cherry wood on top of the lit charcoal. This adds subtle smoke to the bake — do NOT use hickory or mesquite (too aggressive for 90-second bake).
3. Install the heat deflector LEGS-UP. This is the key setup detail: the ceramic deflector plate normally sits flat for indirect cooking, but for pizza we flip it so the legs point up. This creates a spacer between the deflector and the pizza stone above it.
4. Place the pizza stone on top of the deflector legs. The stone should be about 5 cm above the deflector plate, with open air between them.
5. Close the dome. Target temperature: 320–370 °C. Manage vents to reach and hold this range (typically: bottom vent 2/3 open, top vent 2/3 open; adjust as needed).
6. Preheat 30–45 minutes. The stone must be fully heat-saturated, not just hot on the surface.
7. Verify with infrared thermometer: point at the stone surface. Target: 320–370 °C. If the pit temp is 350 but the stone reads 280, the stone is not yet saturated — wait another 10–15 minutes.



WHY THIS WORKS

The kamado-as-pizza-oven setup recreates the three-way heat transfer of a wood-fired oven. First, the pizza stone radiates heat upward to the pizza bottom (floor radiation). Second, the kamado dome absorbs heat from the firebox and re-radiates it downward to the pizza top (dome radiation). Third, convective currents from the charcoal combustion circulate hot air around the pizza (convection). The deflector-legs-up configuration is critical: without the air gap, the deflector and stone become a single thermal mass that heats too slowly and produces dense, pale bottoms. With the air gap, the stone gets radiant heat from below and re-radiates it, producing the leopard-spotted underbelly that defines great pizza. This geometric trick is how a \$2,000 kamado can approach a \$6,000 wood-fired oven's results. Reference: Kamado Mastery chapter 7; Food Science Core chapter 4 (Heat Transfer).

3


Shape + Top + Launch — The 5-Minute Window

1. Dust your work surface with 00 flour or semolina (semolina has larger grains and acts as tiny ball bearings — better non-stick than flour).
2. Take one warmed dough ball. Flip it so the seam is on the bottom (the smooth side faces up).
3. Press down on the center of the ball with fingertips, working outward. Leave a 1 cm untouched rim — this becomes the cornicione (the puffed edge that defines Neapolitan texture).
4. Lift the dough. Let gravity help stretch it — drape it over your knuckles and rotate slowly, letting it extend. Target diameter: 28–30 cm.
5. DO NOT use a rolling pin. Rolling pins crush the air bubbles in the dough and destroy the cornicione. Hand-stretching preserves the bubbles.
6. Transfer the stretched dough to a wooden peel that is well-floured (flour AND semolina). Work fast from this point — wet toppings + wooden peel + delay = stuck pizza.
7. Top the pizza: 80 g of hand-crushed tomato in a spiral from center outward, stopping 2 cm from the edge. Salt the tomato with a pinch of fine sea salt (this matters — salt on tomato, not on cheese). Scatter 80 g of well-drained mozzarella. Light EVOO drizzle. No basil yet.
8. Shake the peel gently to verify the pizza slides freely. If it sticks, tilt the peel and add more semolina under the stuck spot.
9. Open the kamado dome SLOWLY — burp 5 cm open first to prevent flashback — then fully open. Move fast: dome open = heat bleeding out.
10. Launch: angle the peel over the stone, then use a quick jerk-and-pull motion to slide the pizza onto the stone. The pizza should land centered on the stone.
11. Close the dome immediately. Start 90-second timer.

 **WHY THIS WORKS**

The launch phase is where new kamado pizza cooks fail most often. Three specific failure modes: (1) Pizza sticks to peel — caused by insufficient flour/semolina under the dough, or by topping the pizza and then waiting too long before launch. Rule: once toppings are on, launch within 2 minutes. (2) Pizza folds or tears on launch — caused by over-stretched dough or over-handling. Rule: if the dough is visibly thin in the middle (translucent), it is too thin; it will tear. (3) Stone is not hot enough — infrared thermometer before each launch. Second, third, fourth pizzas often suffer because the stone cools after the first launch — allow 3–5 min stone recovery between pizzas, verified with the thermometer. Reference: Kamado Mastery chapter 7.

4 The 90-Second Bake

1. At T+45 seconds: slowly open dome (burp, then open). Use metal peel to rotate the pizza 180° — slide the peel under, lift slightly, rotate, set back down. Close dome.
2. At T+90 seconds: open dome (burp, then open). Visual assessment:
3. — Cornicione: should be puffed up and show dark charred spots (not uniform brown — leopard spots are the goal)
4. — Bottom: lift the pizza slightly with the peel. The bottom should show dark brown/black spots scattered across a lighter brown base (leopard-spotted)
5. — Cheese: should be fully melted and bubbling, with spots of caramelization
6. — Tomato: should look vibrant and slightly darkened at the edges, not washed-out pale
7. If ALL four criteria are met: retrieve. If NOT: close dome, another 30 seconds, reassess.
8. At T+90–180 sec: retrieve with metal peel. Slide under pizza, lift, transfer to cutting board or plate.
9. IMMEDIATELY finish: torn fresh basil leaves (placed on the molten cheese, where residual heat wilts them perfectly), final drizzle of EVOO (a light one — the pizza already has tomato oil from the bake), Maldon flaky salt pinch.
10.  finish toppings: DRAPE thin slices of jamón Ibérico on top (the pizza heat softens the fat; the meat is NOT cooked through — intentional). Shave Manchego with vegetable peeler, scatter. Drizzle a micro-amount of honey (1/4 tsp max — restraint matters).
11. REST the pizza for 60 seconds before cutting. Fresh mozzarella is molten at 90+ °C when it comes off the kamado; it will burn mouths. The rest also lets the bottom re-crisp slightly.

WHY THIS WORKS

The 90-second bake is exactly long enough for three specific processes to complete simultaneously. First, the top surface (tomato and cheese) heats to about 90 °C — enough to fully melt mozzarella and lightly caramelize the tomato surface without reducing the tomato to a thick paste. Second, the bottom crust reaches about 200 °C — producing Maillard browning in dark spots (hence leopard pattern) while the surrounding dough is just slightly under-browned (producing the contrast that defines proper crust). Third, the internal dough reaches 95–100 °C — fully cooked but still soft and slightly chewy. If the bake goes longer than 180 seconds, the cheese separates (oil pools out, protein goes rubbery), the tomato reduces too much, and the crust becomes crisp-dry instead of puffy-leopard. This is why Neapolitan pizza is baked fast and served hot — the entire recipe depends on the 90-second window. Reference: Food Science Core chapter 2 (Maillard Reaction); Kamado Mastery chapter 7.

QUICK REFERENCE

Timing Cheat Sheet

STEP	TIME	CUE
Mix dough + autolyse	15 min mix + 15 min rest	Shaggy wet mass, no dry spots
Bulk ferment + 4 stretch-and-folds	2 hours total	Smooth elastic dough, passes windowpane
Divide + ball + cold ferment	48-72 h refrigerated	Dough balls visibly expanded, loose but not collapsed
Pull from fridge + room temp warm-up	2 hours	Dough soft and extensible when gently pressed
Light kamado + install setup + preheat	30-45 min	Pit at 350 °C, stone surface verified by IR thermometer
Shape pizza #1 by hand	3-5 min	28-30 cm diameter, 1 cm untouched cornicione, no thin spots
Top + transfer to peel + launch	2 min	Pizza slides freely on peel, dome burped before launch
90-second bake + rotate at T+45	90-180 sec per pizza	Leopard-spotted cornicione + bottom, melted bubbling cheese
Finish + rest + cut + serve	2-3 min	Basil wilted, EVOO glossy, molten cheese set enough to cut cleanly
Stone recovery between pizzas	3-5 min	Stone surface back to 320-370 °C by IR thermometer

Emergency Protocols

PIZZA STUCK TO PEEL AT LAUNCH

Shake the peel harder — sometimes the pizza slides at the last moment. If truly stuck: use a bench scraper to loosen the stuck section, rescue with more semolina under the spot.

Prevention: shake the peel EVERY time you add a topping to verify slide-ability; work fast once toppings are on (2 min max); use semolina not just flour; keep the peel well-floured.

PIZZA FOLDED OR TORE ON LAUNCH

Dough was either over-stretched (visible thin spots) or over-handled. In the moment: retrieve whatever landed on the stone; scoop any fallen topping off with the metal peel. Salvage the deformed pizza — it still tastes great even if ugly. Next time: stretch to 28–30 cm max, not more; handle the dough less; if it tears during stretch, that dough ball is done — use the next one.

BOTTOM IS CHARCOAL-BLACK (BURNED) AT 90 SEC

Stone was too hot (above 400 °C). Check pit temp — if pit is 350 but stone is 400+, the stone is over-saturated. Open vents and wait 5 min for stone to cool slightly. Next pizza should be fine.

Prevention: always IR-thermometer-verify BEFORE each launch.

BOTTOM IS PALE / UNDERCOOKED AT 90 SEC

Stone was too cold OR pizza had too much moisture. Check stone temp after retrieve. If stone reads 280 °C or below, close vents to hold heat in, wait 10 min for stone to recover to 320+. If stone temp was fine, the pizza had too much wet topping — drain mozzarella longer next time, use less tomato sauce (60 g instead of 80 g).

DOME THERMOMETER READS 350 BUT STONE IS COLD

Stone not saturated. Dome thermometer reads air temp; stone takes longer to heat up than air. Wait 15–30 more minutes. Don't launch until IR thermometer confirms stone at 320+. Prevention: 45 min preheat is the minimum, not the target.

FIRST PIZZA PERFECT, SECOND PIZZA BOTTOM PALE

Stone cooled by first launch. Allow 3–5 min between pizzas for stone recovery. Check IR thermometer before each launch. Prevention: don't rush back-to-back launches.

CORNICIONE NOT PUFFED (FLAT ALL AROUND)

Dough was over-stretched at the edges OR rolling pin was used. No fix for the current pizza — bake as is. Next time: leave a visible 1 cm untouched rim when pressing the dough center. Stretch only the interior, NEVER the rim. Hand-stretching only, never rolling pin.

PIZZA STICKS TO STONE MID-BAKE

At T+45 sec rotation: if the pizza won't lift cleanly, it's stuck — usually because stone needed more flour/semolina (stone retains whatever was on the peel's bottom). Use metal peel to carefully wedge under and lift. Next time: generous semolina on the peel to transfer to the stone.

FLASHBACK FLAME WHEN OPENING KAMADO

Always burp the kamado (crack dome 5 cm, wait 5 seconds, then fully open). Flashback happens when hot fuel-rich environment gets a sudden O₂ surge. Never just fling the dome open at pizza temperatures. Keep eyebrows: burp.

DEEP DIVES

Technique Notes

Universal: The Kamado Pizza Setup (Deflector Legs-Up)

KAMADO TECHNIQUE • HEAT TRANSFER • UNIVERSAL

The technique that matters most for kamado pizza is the heat deflector positioned LEGS-UP with the pizza stone sitting on top of the legs. This creates an air gap between the deflector and the stone, allowing the stone to heat by radiation rather than conduction. Without the air gap, the deflector and stone become a single thermal mass that heats slowly and produces pale, dense pizza bottoms. With the air gap, the stone gets radiant heat from below and re-radiates it at 200+ °C — producing the leopard-spotted underbelly that defines proper pizza. This is the geometric trick that makes a kamado approach wood-fired-oven performance. Apply the same principle to any high-heat flatbread application (naan, lavash, pa amb tomàquet). Reference: Kamado Mastery chapter 7.

● Universal: 48-72 Hour Cold Ferment Transforms Pizza Dough

BREAD TECHNIQUE • COLD FERMENT • UNIVERSAL

Same-day pizza dough (8-12 hour ferment) is restaurant-weeknight pizza. 48-72 hour cold ferment is restaurant-flagship pizza. The long refrigerator ferment does two things fast ferment cannot: First, flour enzymes (amylase + protease) break starches into sugars and proteins into amino acids over 48+ hours, creating a deep pool of flavor precursors that develop into complex aromatic compounds during the 90-second bake. Second, the slow yeast activity produces ester compounds (fruity, complex) that fast ferment cannot. Lab-tested: cold-fermented dough has 3-4x more volatile flavor compounds than same-day. This is why Pepe's, Una Pizza Napoletana, and Pizzeria Bianco all cold-ferment 48-72+ hours. The time is the flavor. Reference: Bread and Baking chapter 4 and 6.

● Universal: Stretch by Hand, Never by Rolling Pin

PIZZA TECHNIQUE • SHAPING • UNIVERSAL

A rolling pin crushes the air bubbles in the fermented dough and destroys the cornicione (the puffed rim that defines Neapolitan texture). Hand-stretching preserves the bubbles and leaves a visible 1 cm untouched rim that puffs dramatically during the 90-second bake. The correct motion: press dough ball from center outward with fingertips, leaving 1 cm rim untouched; lift and rotate, letting gravity stretch the interior. Target: 28-30 cm diameter. Do not aim for thin throughout — aim for thin interior + puffy cornicione. This is the hand-stretching test: a pizza that was rolling-pinned looks flat-all-around; a hand-stretched pizza has a visible ring rim. Reference: Bread and Baking chapter 5; Kamado Mastery chapter 7.

● Universal: Less Topping, Not More

PIZZA PHILOSOPHY • TOPPING DISCIPLINE • UNIVERSAL

The most common home-pizza failure mode is too much topping. A 90-second bake cannot evaporate excess moisture from heavy toppings, so over-topped pizza turns into soup. The classical Margherita uses 80 g tomato + 80 g mozzarella + 5 basil + EVOO + salt — that's it. The Pablo-Spanish variant adds 6-8 thin slices of jamón AFTER bake (not baked), shaved Manchego AFTER bake, and a drizzle of honey. Never double the cheese. Never add 3-4 topping ingredients. One tomato, one cheese, one herb, one oil, one finisher — five ingredients maximum per pizza. This discipline is what separates Neapolitan-style from American-style, and it's the single biggest change home cooks need to make. Reference: Kamado Mastery chapter 7.

● No Limits: Sourdough Discard Pizza Dough Variant

SOURDOUGH TECHNIQUE • WEEKLY ROTATION • PABLO PATTERN

Pablo maintains an active sourdough mother that produces roughly 350 g of discard per week. Pizza dough is an ideal discard application. Use discard that is 4–6 hours past its last feed (still active but past peak, so it contributes fermentation without competing with the insurance yeast). This creates a three-bread weekly rotation: Master Sourdough Loaf (UMAMI-10 #1, Saturday), Focaccia (UMAMI-10 #2, Thursday with Tuesday discard), Kamado Pizza (Friday dinner party with Wednesday discard). Three breads, one active starter cycle, zero waste. The sourdough pizza flavor is noticeably more complex than pure-yeast pizza — subtle tang in the cornicione, more aromatic crumb. Reference: Bread and Baking chapter 6 (Sourdough Maintenance).

● No Limits: Pablo-Spanish Avant-Garde Fusion Topping

FUSION • SPANISH-ITALIAN • PABLO SIGNATURE

The Pablo-Spanish Margherita is the avant-garde Spanish-Italian fusion that respects both Italian and Spanish traditions. Start with the classical Margherita base (tomato + buffalo mozzarella + basil + EVOO), but elevate: (1) Drape 6–8 thin slices of jamón Ibérico ON TOP after the pizza leaves the kamado — never baked, because 350 °C destroys the fat texture; the residual pizza heat just warms the jamón to release its aroma. (2) Shave aged Manchego with a vegetable peeler AFTER bake — adds sharp nutty finish. (3) Drizzle a micro-amount of raw honey (1/4 tsp max) at finish — the avant-garde sweet-salty move Pablo loves on pork applications. (4) Pimentón-infused Arbequina EVOO as the final drizzle — Spanish paprika oil that anchors the whole pizza to the Spanish side of the fusion. Reference: Sauces and Condiments chapter 6 (Infused Oils); Protein Encyclopedia chapter 5 (Jamón Ibérico).

PAIRING

What to Drink


Wine — Italian Classical

Young Chianti Classico OR Aglianico del Vulture

The Italian regional pairings for Neapolitan pizza. Chianti's bright acidity cuts tomato richness; Aglianico (southern Italy) matches the smoky char from the kamado. Both are food-friendly with moderate tannin. The classical bottle on any serious pizzeria table.

Wine — Pablo Spanish Variant

Garnacha from Calatayud OR Tempranillo from Ribera del Duero

For the  Pablo-Spanish topping (jamón + Manchego + pimentón oil + honey), the Spanish reds are the natural pairing. Garnacha is lighter and fruit-forward — works with the jamón. Tempranillo is denser and earthy — matches the pimentón oil and the smoky kamado char. Choose by the topping intensity.

Italian Sparkling

Franciacorta (méthode champenoise, Lombardia)

For dinner-party-level pizza service: Italian traditional-method sparkling. The bubbles cut the pizza's richness, the acidity refreshes between bites, and the Italian regional identity honors the dish's origin. Berlucchi, Bellavista, and Ferghettina are excellent references.

Casual Alternative

Peroni Nastro Azzurro OR Menabrea Ligurian Pilsner

For casual outdoor kamado pizza nights — Italian Pilsner is the universal pizza pairing. Cold, crisp, cuts the cheese richness, refreshes between slices. Peroni is the Miami accessible option; Menabrea (from Biella, northern Italy) is the specialist upgrade. Both are exactly right for backyard service.

Menu Ideas

Outdoor Dinner Party (8-12 guests)

Kamado pizza is THE backyard dinner party. Make 4-5 dough balls (doubling the recipe); prep toppings for 2-3 variants (classical Margherita + Pablo-Spanish + one seasonal white pizza with mushrooms or pumpkin). Guests crowd around the kamado watching the 90-second bakes. Serve slices as they come off the kamado — continuous rolling service, not a formal sit-down. Accompany with tapas-style starters (padrón peppers, olives, jamón board) and a simple green salad. Outdoor setting, Italian/Spanish wine, 3-4 hours of grazing. The most social dinner party format Pablo has.

Family Pizza Night (Pablo's kids pattern)

Pablo's kids eat everything — no dumbing down needed. Make 2 classical Margheritas (kid-friendly), 1 Pablo-Spanish (adults), 1 seasonal white (adults). Everyone crowds around the kamado. Kids help shape dough and top (carefully supervised near the hot kamado). This is active-cooking time, not a preamble to dinner. Goes well with a simple tomato salad, sparkling water for kids, Italian Pilsner or Chianti for adults. 2 hours including prep, active + social.

Weekly Sourdough Rotation Integration

Pairs with Pablo's Master Sourdough Loaf (UMAMI-10 #1) and Focaccia (UMAMI-10 #2) in a three-bread weekly cycle using one active starter mother. Monday: feed mother. Tuesday morning: pull discard → weekend focaccia dough in fridge. Wednesday morning: pull discard → Friday pizza dough in fridge (48 h ferment). Friday evening: kamado pizza dinner party. Saturday morning: pull discard again → Saturday afternoon Master Sourdough Loaf bake. Three breads per week, zero waste from the starter, full exploitation of Pablo's active mother.

Cross-Recipe Integration

Complements UMAMI-10 #2 Focaccia (same hydration discipline, different shape/application); UMAMI-10 #1 Sourdough Loaf (same mother, different finished form); UMAMI-6 #1 Ibérico Secreto (same kamado, different protein). Classical alioli (UMAMI-9 #2) works as a dipping sauce for the cornicione — Spanish-Italian bridge on a pizza board. Romesco (UMAMI-9 #3) as an alternative 'sauce base' instead of tomato for a deep-autumn Catalan pizza variant. The kamado pizza recipe is the anchor for the Friday-night-dinner-party pattern; other recipes slot in around it.

YOUR NOTES

Cook Log

Session Notes

Date: _____ · Serves: _____ · Rating: __ / 5

Use this space to record what you changed, what worked, and what you'd do differently next time. Your future self will thank you.



Stop following recipes. Start understanding food.

