



Why is AVPN so important in pizza cooking?

AVPN, the Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana, is the international standard of the true Neapolitan pizza. It takes its place alongside authentication certificates created in the mid-90s for fine wine, olive oil, cheese and traditional goodies. These stamps of approval help discerning foodies pick out the products that follow strict guidelines, celebrate traditional methods and are of the finest quality.

The original Neapolitan pizza sits more than comfortably with the great and good of European certifications – it was actually one of the first to lay out its code, way back in 1984.

What does the AVPN say?

The AVPN is very clear in its mission to protect the true Neapolitan pizza. Since 1984, a proper Neapolitan pizza has to follow the traditional recipe created to celebrate Italian Queen Magherita's 1889 visit to Naples.

The AVPN says you should cook a Neapolitan pizza at 430 to 480°C in a wood-fired oven and when you whisk it out with your pizza peel, it should have a diameter of 35cm, have puffed, burn-free edges and be 'soft and fragrant'.

It even details how to scatter the grated cheese ('with a circular and uniform movement of the hand') and how to drizzle the extra virgin olive oil ('in a spiral motion').

What are the original Neapolitan pizza ingredients?

Like most other pizzas (we'll talk gluten-free another time), the Neapolitan pizza dough has water, salt, yeast and flour. But the amounts depend on the temperature, humidity and degree of absorption – it all gets very maths heavy.

Water: 1 litre (1000 ml)

Salt: 40-60 grams

Yeast (based on temperature and humidity):

- Fresh beer yeast 0.1-3 grams



- Mother Yeast 5 to 20% of flour used
- Dry yeast 1/3 of fresh yeast used (1 gram of dry for 3 grams of fresh)

Flour: 1,600/1,800 grams (depending on the degree of absorption)

Source: https://www.pizzanapoletana.org/en/ricetta_pizza_napoletana

There are requirements for the time the dough rises, the time the dough cooks, the temperature the pizza cooks at, the temperature the pizza rises at and even the temperature the water is when you mix the dough.

What are the original Neapolitan pizza toppings?

Inspired by Italy's red, white and green flag, the original Neapolitan pizza used only red tomato sauce, white mozzarella cheese and green basil leaves. And it still does. The AVPN prefers all the ingredients to be from Campania, the countryside surrounding Naples – challenging if you're trying to re-create an AVPN Neapolitan pizza in the UK.

How should I make an AVPN Neapolitan pizza?

It's not all about the ingredients. The devil is in the details, as the AVPN's 14-page document suggests. The code of pizza conduct says the salt and yeast should be in contact for less than five minutes to prevent the salt damaging the yeast. Dough balls should weigh 200 to 280 grams. And you work the dough out with the fingers of both hands, turning the dough until you have an even recognisable pizza base that doesn't deviate in depth more than .25cm.

Do you spin an AVPN-approved Neapolitan pizza?

Purists say no. Pizza chefs in Naples can be quite sneery about spinning pizzas, and the guide says, 'The base must be prepared by hand ... no other type of preparation is acceptable'. So that's that, then.

Are you ready to give the Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana Neapolitan pizza a go?

