

# Flavours of France



## SUPER-LEGIT PIZZA DOUGH

(makes enough for three large pizza bases)

- 350ml (1½ cups) warm (not hot) water
- 1 tbsp salt
- 525g (4 cups) flour type 00
- a pinch of instant yeast

For the super-legit pizza dough, pour the water into a large bowl.

Add the salt and leave until dissolved. Whisk in 50g (scant ½ cup) of the flour, mixing well. Add the yeast and gradually mix in the rest of the flour to make a dough.

Knead the dough for about 20 minutes or until it is smooth. Cover with cling film (plastic wrap) and leave to rise at room temperature for two hours. Portion the dough into three

equal pieces and roll into balls. Put them in an airtight container – the container must be very wide so the dough balls don't stick together as they expand. Leave to rise at room temperature for six hours or, better still, for 12-36 hours in the refrigerator, as this will give the dough a better texture and flavour.

Bravo! You've just made my

super-legit pizza dough.

(If you are not using all three balls of dough straightaway, put the unused balls in a lightly greased bowl, cover with cling film and refrigerate for up to two days. Or put in sealed bags and freeze for up to three months; thaw in the refrigerator overnight and allow to come to room temperature before using).

## Eat...

### TARTE FLAMBÉE PIZZA

*Tarte flambée is a speciality of Alsace in eastern France, where it's also known as flammekueche. To me it's every inch a pizza: in shape, in how it's made and how it's cooked.*

#### INGREDIENTS

(serves three)

- 50g (2oz) good-quality smoked bacon rashers (slices) – don't stint on these
- a little olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 100g (scant ½ cup) ricotta or full-fat natural Greek yogurt
- 4 tbsp thick crème fraîche, 30% fat
- salt and pepper
- freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 ball of uncooked pizza dough, ready to roll out

#### METHOD

Cut the bacon into small lardons. Heat a little olive oil in a frying pan (skillet) and fry the bacon and onions over a very low heat until the onions are translucent. In a bowl, mix together the ricotta or yogurt and crème fraîche. Season with salt and pepper and a little grated nutmeg. Preheat the oven to its highest setting and, if you don't have a pizza stone, preheat an upturned griddle pan in the oven. Roll out one ball of pizza dough with a rolling pin until about 20-25cm (8-10in) in diameter. Place the round of pizza dough on a sheet of baking parchment and spread the cream mixture over it. Top with the onions and bacon lardons. Slide the pizza onto the pizza stone or preheated griddle pan and bake for 5-10 minutes or until the edges of the dough are lightly charred and puffed up.

Extracted from  
*Just A French Guy*  
Cooking by Alexis  
Gabriel Aïnouz  
(Quadrille, £15)  
Photography  
© Dan Jones



On the menu next month:  
*Foolproof brioche*

## Drink...



This month, **Richard Hemming** comes to the defence of Beaujolais as he continues to discover the great wines of France as mentioned in great quotes

**WINE QUOTER, PART FIVE:**  
**FRANÇOIS MAUSS AND BEAUJOLAIS**

### “C’est un vin de merde!”

François Mauss might not be a household name, but he certainly gained notoriety back in 2002 when he applied this scatological judgement to not just one French wine, but an entire French wine region: Beaujolais.

The quote was published in *Lyon Mag*, which was promptly sued by a union of 63 Beaujolais producers.

The courts initially ruled in favour of the *vignerons*, and imposed a fine of nearly €300,000 on the magazine – although that was overturned two years later on appeal.

What had inspired Mauss to use such a damning turn of phrase? Apparently, the target was a large volume of poor quality wine that had been made in the 2001 vintage, but it drew attention to the fact that Beaujolais was a region whose overall reputation had been fading fast.

After much soul-searching, and after an excellent vintage in 2009, Beaujolais managed to revive its ailing fortunes, and since then it has been resurgent, finding favour with a new generation of sommeliers and drinkers who appreciate the light body, refreshing acidity and bright fruit character that it delivers so well.

The two most common *appellations* are Beaujolais and Beaujolais-Villages. The former is the simplest and lightest style, whereas the latter is a superior version blended from the better vineyard sites.

Then, there are 13 individually named *appellations* such as Fleurie and St-Amour, whose historic reputation for quality means they are known by the name of their local village alone.

Here are three examples to prove that good Beaujolais is far from *merde*.



#### Jean-Claude Lapalu, Vieilles Vignes 2017 Brouilly (£22 Noble Green Wines)

Despite challenging conditions, the 2017 vintage in Beaujolais resulted in superb quality in the hands of experts such as Lapalu. The old vines bottling comes from the *appellation* of Brouilly, the southernmost of the 13 Beaujolais villages. This wine epitomises the lightness of body yet beautiful intensity of floral perfume and ripe red fruit that makes Beaujolais so uniquely enticing.

#### Du Grappin 2017 Côte-du-Brouilly (£19 legrappin.com)

Andrew Nielsen is the genial Aussie behind the Grappin range of wines in Beaujolais. Rather than owning vineyards, he buys parcels of the best fruit each year and makes the best wine he can – likening himself to a butcher that sources the best meat and then prepares cuts of it for his customers. Côte du Brouilly is a subzone of Brouilly where the steepest slopes produce sweeter, riper fruit. This is modern, plush and vivid.



#### Domaine Manoir du Carra, Non-Filtré 2016 Beaujolais-Villages (£11.75 Amps Wine Merchants)

Beaujolais-Villages is a blend of wines made across the various villages of the region – a bit like a blended scotch as opposed to a single malt. This 'unfiltered' version has charming plummy fruit with typical violet aromas and tannic structure that is relatively firm for Beaujolais, making this ideal for pairing with heartier dishes – proving that Beaujolais can be a versatile food match.