Fogazzo
WOOD FIRED OVENS & BBQs®

"FIRE WITH STYLE"

MODEL 850
WOOD FIRED OVEN KIT

Installation Instructions
&
Owners Manual

Fogazzo Wood Fired Ovens and Barbecues LLC

Manufacturing, import, export, sales, and the distribution of wood fired ovens, barbecues, fireplaces and related accessories.

USA Headquarters:
114 E Saint Joseph Street
Arcadia CA 91106
Toll Free: 1-866-364-2996
(626) 799-8110 Fax
www.fogazzo.com
info@fogazzo.com

Model 850 Installation Instructions
Images by: Christina Mortimer, Sergio de Paula and Ricardo Forte
Text by: Christina Mortimer and Sergio de Paula
Illustrations by: Sergio de Paula and Santiago de Tezanos

Note:
All text, illustrations, specifications, etc, are based on information available at the time of publication. Fogazzo Wood Fired Ovens and Barbecues LLC reserves the right to make changes at any time without notice.

Important:
Check with the local building authority and or fire department having jurisdiction over your project for all construction and permit requirements and or use approvals prior to the start of your installation.

Warranty:
A copy of the Fogazzo Limited Warranty is found on the last page of this manual and is also posted on the world wide web at http://www.fogazzo.com/waranty.html

UL and NFPA Compliance
This product has been tested to comply with the "Underwriters Laboratory" *UL 737 Standard* for "Fireplace Stoves" and, meets the "National Fire Protection Association" *NFPA Classification* of a "Prefabricated Fire Chamber Assembly". It shall be professionally installed in accordance to these instructions in order to maintain its *UL and NFPA Compliance.*

This product must be installed in accordance to the *NFPA Standards* for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents and Solid Fuel Burning Appliances *"NFPA 211"* in addition to all applicable local code requirements.

All chimney systems used in conjunction with this product must be *"Class A"* double-wall insulated metal pipe, tested to meet the UL 103 HT Standards and be must be installed in strict accordance to it's manufacturers instructions.

Declaration of Conformity

Fogazzo hereby declares that this product is in conformity with the following standards and directives of the EEC

Fogazzo Model 850
Wood Fired Oven Kit

89/106 EEC
Construction Products Directive

93/68/EEC
EC Marking Directive

CE

The construction files for this product are held by Fogazzo (the manufacturer) and would be available for inspection by a national authority, upon request.

Signed by: Sergio de Paula 21st May 2001

For Fogazzo Wood Fired Ovens and Barbecues LLC

Thank you for choosing a Fogazzo Wood Fired Oven.

Because of the assembly requirements and unique features of this product, we have developed this Installation Instructions and Owner's Manual to assist you. It contains valuable information on how to properly install, operate and maintain your new oven.

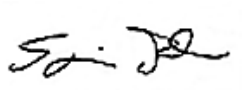
Please read all instructions carefully and plan your installation well ahead of time to ensure the timely completion of your project. This installation system is designed for professionals with full knowledge of construction practices and is not recommended for amateurs or do-it-yourselfers. If you are unsure of any aspect of this installation, please consult Fogazzo or a qualified local contractor.

Every oven installation is unique because generally, the architectural elements of the home will dictate the style and types of finishes to be used.

The aim of these plans is to convey known practices that are considered essential for a good installation. All Fogazzo plans emphasize the efficiency and safety for the completed installation. A well-insulated oven will perform more efficiently and therefore better. The six inch concrete shelf is designed to support the oven and increase heat retention. The shelf will also reduce the risk of cold air hitting a hot oven floor from underneath, which could cause excessive cracking. Minimal cracking inside the oven is expected and is a characteristic of any cast refractory product. Vermiculite and the mineral wool heat blanket are used as insulation materials to increase efficiency. Both are made from safe, non-flammable, readily available materials.

Following the guidelines contained herein will minimize cracking and insure that your Fogazzo Oven will last a lifetime. Upon completion of the oven installation, it is critical to follow the initial firing guidelines to aid in the proper curing of your installation. Please follow the directions carefully and be patient. Your patience will be rewarded.

Cheers,



Sergio de Paula
President
Fogazzo Wood Fired Ovens and Barbecues LLC

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DO NOT THROW THIS MANUAL AWAY

PLEASE RETAIN THIS MANUAL FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

IF YOUR OVEN IS NOT PROPERLY INSTALLED A FIRE MAY RESULT. FOLLOW THESE INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS AND ALL LOCAL BUILDING AND FIRE CODE REQUIREMENTS CAREFULLY TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FIRE.

FOR YOUR SAFETY

Wood fired ovens must be vented using UL listed chimney components installed in accordance with all relevant Local and National Codes. Fogazzo recommends the use of Simpson Duratech chimney components in strict accordance with the manufacturers installation instructions.

WOOD FIRED OVENS GENERATE CREOSOTE AND OTHER SUBSTANCES THAT WILL ACCUMULATE IN IT'S CHIMNEY OVER TIME. THE RATE OF ACCUMULATION DEPENDS ON FACTORS SUCH AS: FREQUENCY OF USE, FIRE TEMPERATURE, WOOD TYPE AND ITS MOISTURE CONTENT. THOROUGH FLUE AND CHIMNEY INSPECTION AND CLEANING IS THE BEST WAY TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF CHIMNEY FIRES.

Chimney System Maintenance and Creosote Problems

When organic materials such as wood is burned in an oven, volatile gases and vapors are produced. These gases and vapors are carried up the chimney and some will condense on its surface, forming creosote. Chimney creosote is combustible and, if not removed from the inside of the chimney, may cause chimney fires. Chimney fires are very hazardous because their high temperature can cause structural damage to the chimney and surrounding structural elements of the house or can ignite nearby combustible materials. Creosote is produced when any type of wood is burned. Because of their higher extractive content, certain species have more potential than others for producing creosote, but the amount of creosote depends more on the type of fire and on the temperature of the chimney surface. A smoldering, low temperature fire will produce more creosote than a roaring, high temperature fire because the hotter fire burns more of the condensable gases. More creosote will condense on a cool chimney surface than on a warm surface. More creosote is also produced when wet wood is burned because of the lower temperature of the fire and less complete combustion.

Creosote problems can be minimized by:

(**1**) Burning only well seasoned, thoroughly air-dried wood;
(**2**) Making small hot fires instead of large smoldering fires and keeping oven door open
(**3**) cleaning the chimney frequently.

Please refer to the chimney manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and maintenance.

FOGAZZO RECOMMENDS THAT YOU SUBMIT YOUR CHIMNEY PLANS TO THE AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH INSTALLATION OF ANY WOOD BURNING APPLIANCE.

Information on installation and or maintenance is available from Fogazzo, toll free at 1-866-364-2996. It is recommended that this oven be installed, and maintained by qualified professionals.

Model 850
Wood Fired Oven Kit
Installation Instructions

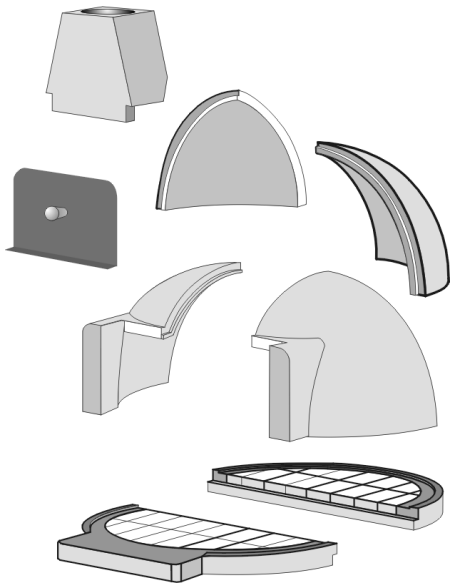
Installation Instructions Toll Free Help Line 1-866-FOGAZZO

Kit Contents

1 ea.	Floor section, pre-cast, front
1 ea.	Floor section , pre-cast, rear
1 ea.	Dome section, pre-cast rear left & right
1 ea.	Dome section, pre-cast front left & right
1 ea.	Flue section, pre-cast
1 ea.	Steel oven door with handle
1 ea.	Bucket of fire-proof sand for mortar mix.
24 sq ft.	2" ceramic insulating blanket

Printed Materials

1 Ea.	Installation Instructions & Owners Manual
1 Ea.	Warranty Card



Order Model 850 accessories at WWW.FOGAZZO.COM

Materials List

Your oven kit does not include anything not listed in the kit contents section above. The following materials list is provided for convenience only. Your materials list will vary based on individual needs.

Foundation and slab

Stakes and Forms
1500 lb or higher strength concrete mix.
#4 rebar

Walls & Shelf

Forms
6 x 8 x16 masonry blocks
Masonry mortar
#4 rebar
1500 lb or higher strength concrete mix.
Vermiculite granules

Roof

Non-flammable roofing material

Chimney (not included in Fogazzo Kit)

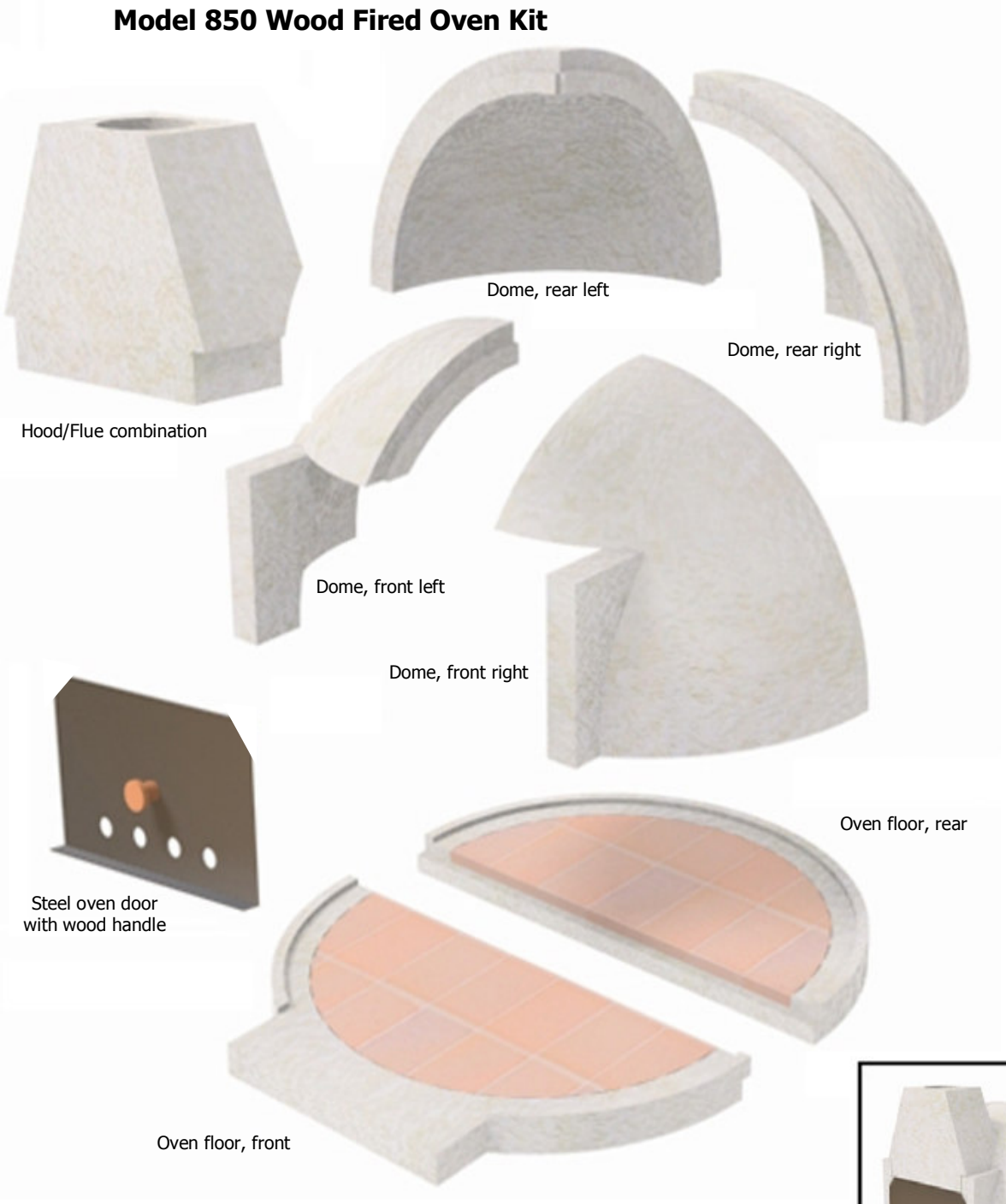
1 each	Duratech® #9441 Anchor plate for 6" pipe
1 each	Duratech® double wall chimney pipe (exact length will depend on individual installation needs)
1 each	Duratech® #9484 Chimney cap with spark arrestor
4 each	Concrete anchors or screws

Duratech® #9441
Anchor plate for 6" pipe

Order your Duratech components by calling toll free 1-(866) FOGAZZO or online at www.fogazzo.com

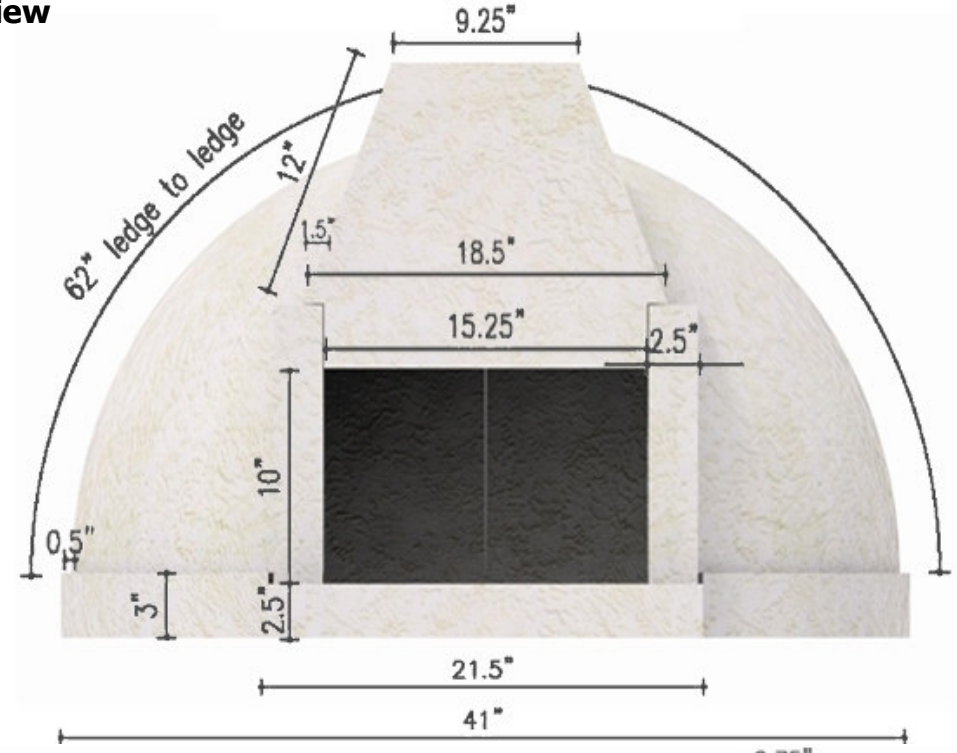
Exploded View

Model 850 Wood Fired Oven Kit

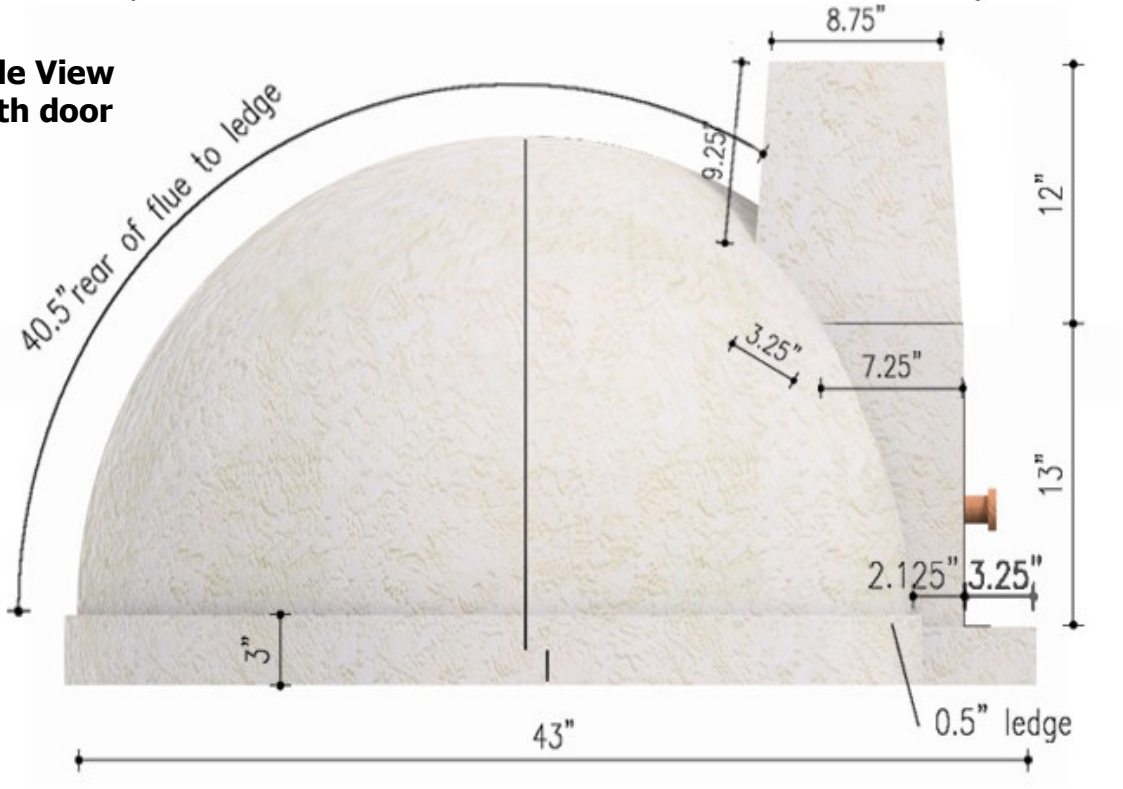


Oven Kit Dimensions

Front View

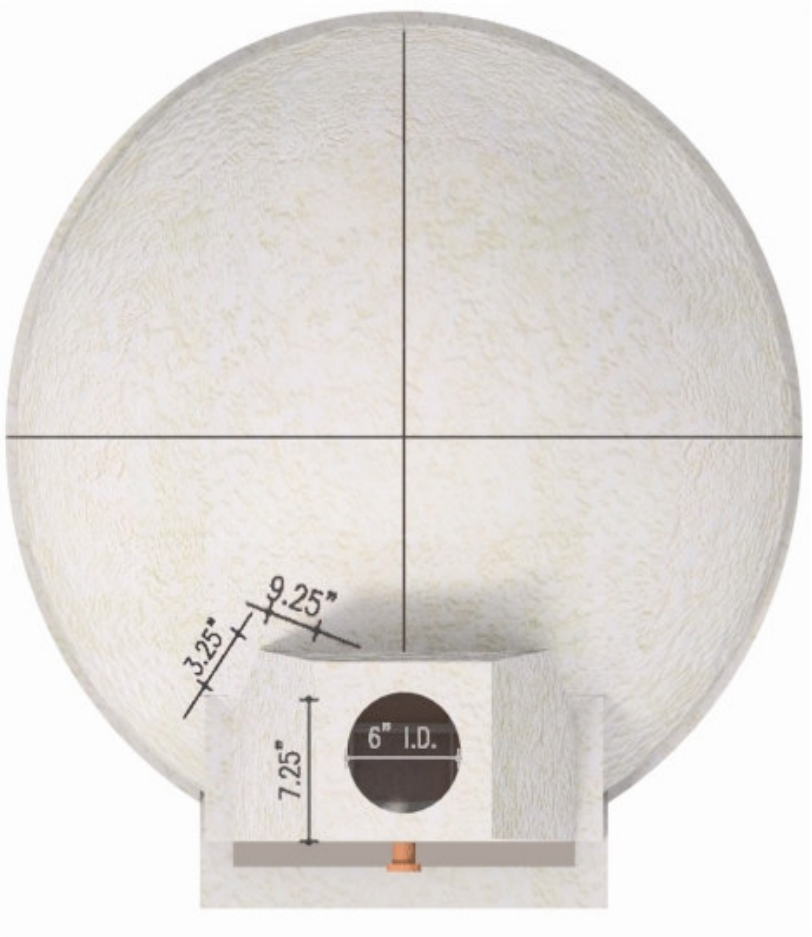


Side View with door



Oven Kit Dimensions

Top View



Foundation and floor slab
Masonry Construction
Concrete Shelf

Installation Instructions Toll Free Help Line 1-866-FOGAZZO

Foundation and floor slab

Dig a 56" wide by 54" front to back hole to a depth of at least 12 inches. Set forms around the perimeter using 2x4 or 2x6 material held by stakes. Place rebar grid using #4 rebar at 12 inches on center in both directions. Place rebar dowels for masonry at 12 to 16 inches on center to a height of 24 to 36 inches.

Pour foundation and floor slab (minimal 4 inches) as a monolith, using 1500 lbs. or higher concrete mix with 3/8" rock. Concrete can be transit mixed and pumped from a truck or mixed on site. Varieties of pre-mixed concrete are readily available at local home centers with cured strength ratings as high as 5000 lbs. Follow mixing instructions on bag.

Walls (first lift)

Erect three walls (two sides and back) using 6x8x16 inch masonry blocks. Build to a height of 40". Allow sufficient time to dry and grout when feasible. Place dowels into grout to re-enforce the concrete shelf as shown on Fig. 2.

Concrete Shelf

Form for concrete shelf using 2x4 material and plywood. The bottom of the shelf should be at 38" up from the finished floor. Install #4 rebar grid 12" on center in both directions and dowels for oven enclosure as shown on Fig. 2. Pour shelf (6 inches) using 1500 lbs. or higher concrete mix with 3/8" to 3/4" rock. Allow this to dry for at least 24 hours. Do **not remove the forms for 3 to 14 days**, as they should not impede the progress of the project.

Fig 1

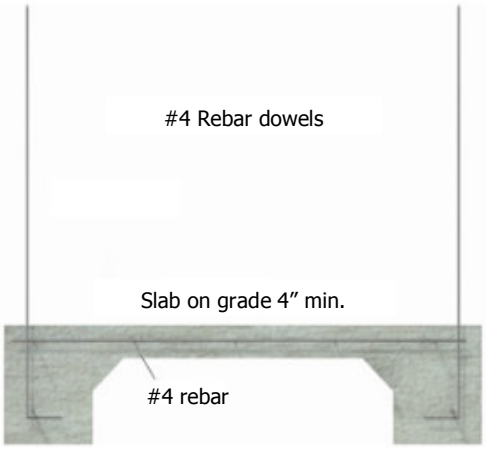
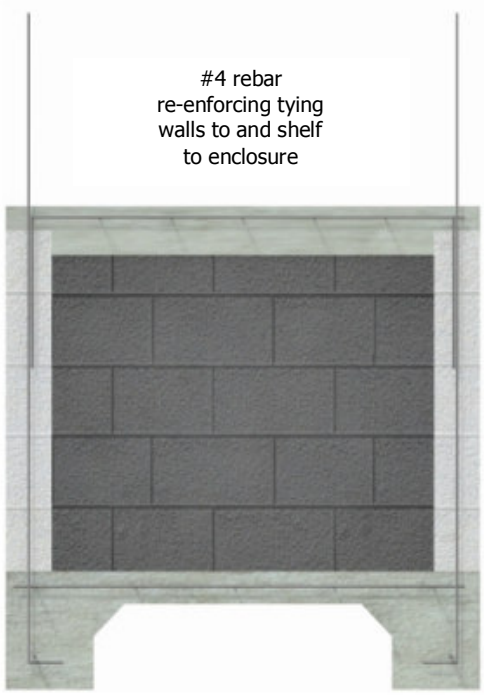


Fig 2



Oven Pre-assembly
Oven Final Assembly

Installation Instructions Toll Free Help Line 1-866-FOGAZZO

Oven Pre-assembly

All our products are hand-made, as such, small imperfections are a known characteristic. In order to achieve the best overall fit, care must be taken in the assembly of the kit.

Dry fit the oven prior to the final assembly!

On a level surface, dry fit the oven kit to ensure a proper fit. Make the necessary adjustments to the pieces to provide the best fit. Start by checking a good fit on the floor pieces. Next set the two dome rear pieces. They will stay up resting on each other. Next set the front dome pieces and, finally the flue. Adjust for the best fit and make marks with a pencil as necessary to show best fit locations. The top of the flue should be as close to flat as possible in both directions.

Note: Small differences can be made up with the finish materials.

Oven Final Assembly

Mix mortar as follows:

- 5 Parts fire-clay sand (provided w/ kit)
- 1 Part Portland Cement

Mix mortar using clean water to the consistency of peanut butter. Do not use any add-mixes.

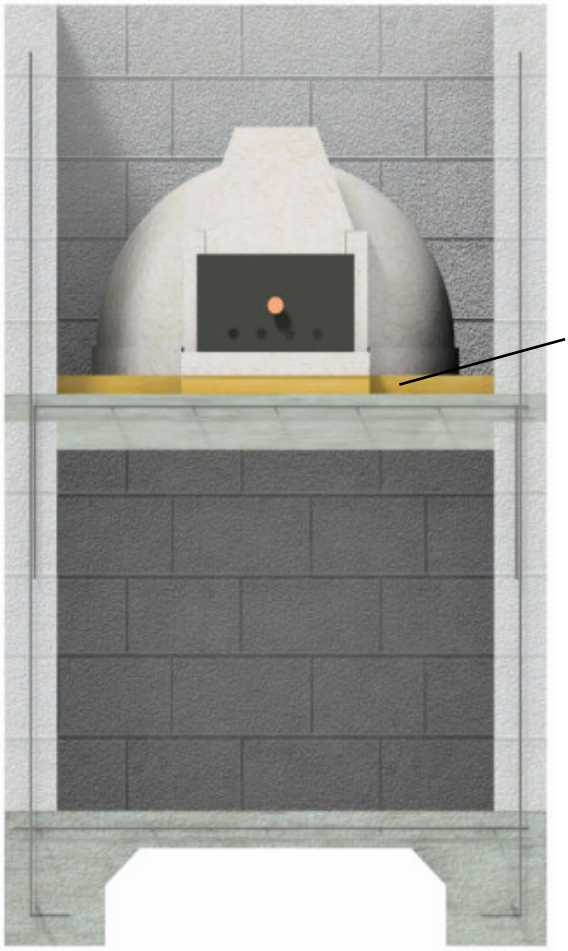
Lay down two 24"x40" sheets of rigid insulation on the concrete shelf where the oven will sit and trim as necessary. Next, set the rear floor piece, followed by floor front. **Front should be 2 inches back from edge of shelf**. Do not mortar these yet. Set all the dome sections dry, followed by the flue, which should be set on layer of mortar. After all the pieces are set, fill the void between the pieces with mortar. Use a trowel to pack mortar well into every joint. Pack mortar in all the joints between the oven walls and the floor on the inside and the outside. Fill the gap between oven floor joints with a soupy mix of mortar. Clean floor joints with a damp sponge for a clean joint.

WARNING!

The inside joints of the dome are to remain without mortar to allow for heat expansion. If these joints are filled, excessive cracking will occur.

Fill dome joints from the outside only!

Fig 3



Oven Assembly

Step 1
Start the oven assembly by placing the 2 floor pieces on a 1.5" layer of insulation board. Butt the pieces for a tight fit.

Step 2
Using a piece of 2x4 for support, set the left rear dome wedge. All the wedges have an "**#**" on the bottom where the wedge will meet the floor.

Step 3
Set the dome rear right wedge, which will now hold up the left wedge, allowing you to remove the wood support.

Step 4
Set the front left wedge, allowing it to rest on the rear pieces already in place.

Step 5
Set the front right wedge, and make the necessary adjustments to achieve the best fit possible .

Step 6
Set the flue on a layer of mortar and adjust to make it as close to level as possible. Fill all the oven joints with mortar per the instructions on page 06.

Oven Enclosure
Chimney & Insulation
Roofing & Exterior Finishes

Installation Instructions Toll Free Help Line 1-866-FOGAZZO

Oven Enclosure
Enclose oven using CMU block masonry or light gauge metal studs and track with cement backer board.

Chimney
Set your chimney anchor plate, Duratech #9441 using concrete screws. Drill for fasteners following the manufacturers directions. **You must be very careful not to damage the flue.** You must use high temperature (550˚F) caulk or other suitable sealer between anchor plate and flue to seal it tight against air leaks. Next set a section of Duratech pipe. The chimney length dictates airflow in the oven. We recommend a minimal of 36" of pipe to ensure proper air flow. Set your cap with spark arrestor Duratech # 9484 to complete the chimney.

Insulation
After oven has dried a minimal of 48 hours, cover it with the 2" ceramic blanket. You can use wire or metal lath to hold it in place. After exterior walls are built, place vermiculite granules to within 3 inches of the top of the enclosure.

Additional Mass
If you wish to increase the mass of your oven, you can add a layer of refractory material to a thickness of 3", using the following mix:
3 parts of Orchid Soil (also known as Hydroton or Clay Rocks or Expanded Clay Pellets)
2 parts Vermiculite
1 part Portland Cement
Mix with clean water place by hand over oven to a thickness of three inches.

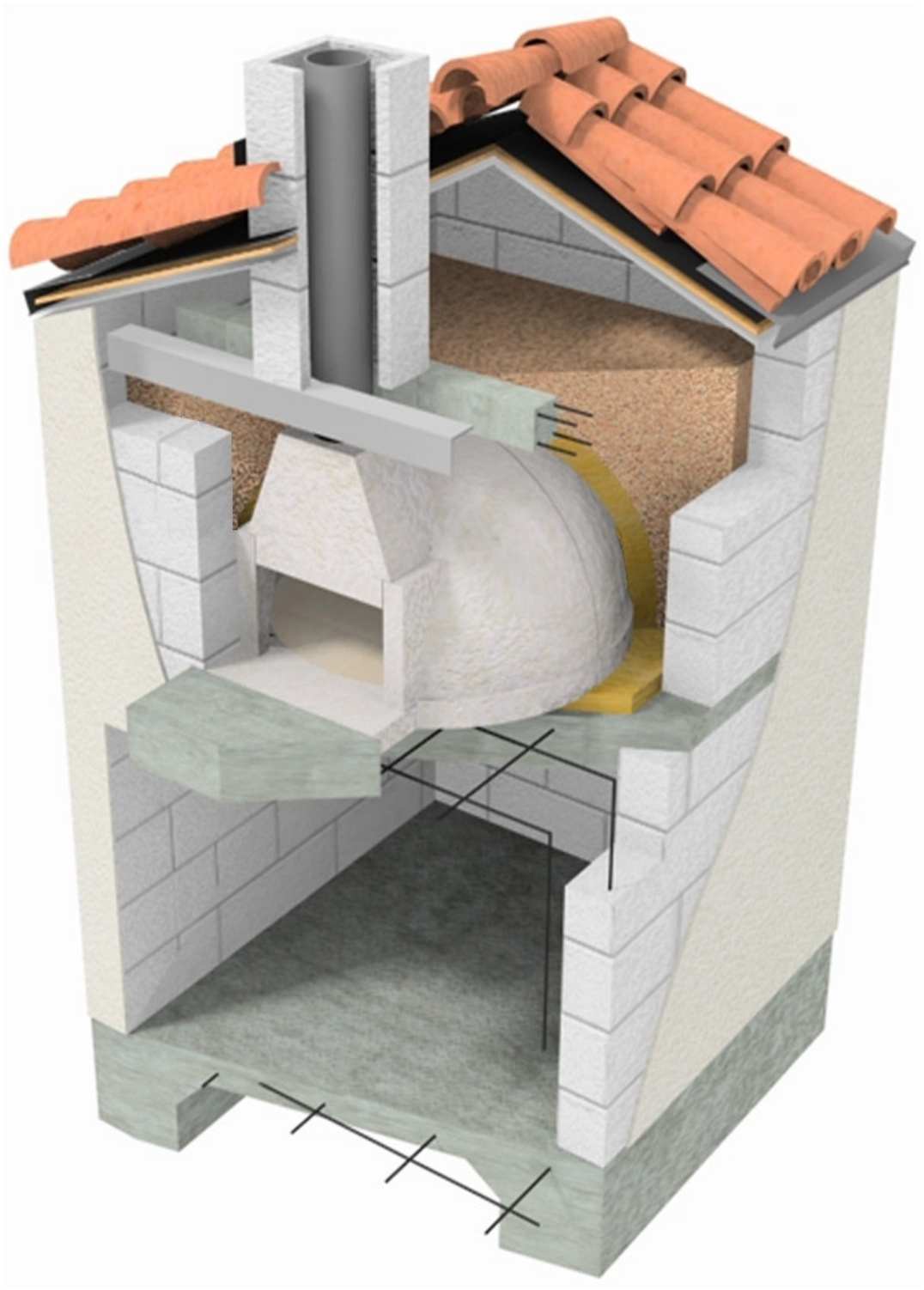
Note: Additional mass is only necessary if you intend to use your oven primarily for bread baking. All other types of cooking do not require more mass than what is present in the oven kit as is.

Venting your enclosure
It is recommended that you vent your installation to avoid thermal pressure. You can leave a small opening toward the top of the enclosure or use a small pipe (1") through the roof.

Roofing and Exterior Finishes
Roof using non-flammable roofing materials that conform to local building codes.

Oven Finishes
Cut-Away View

Installation Instructions Toll Free Help Line 1-866-FOGAZZO



Curing & Initial Firing Resources

Installation Instructions Toll Free Help Line 1-866-FOGAZZO

Curing

You must allow the oven to cure a minimum of 3 days (72 hours) in order to allow sufficient moisture to evaporate from mortar etc., prior to initial firing.

In cold or humid climates it is recommended that the minimal curing period be extended to a full 7 days.

Initial Firing Procedures

Initial firing is the **single most critical component in completing a good installation**. Please follow these instructions carefully to ensure proper operation of your oven for many years to come.

First firing - 4 to 9 hours

NOT TO EXCEED 325° FARENGHEIT

Use three 16 ounce cans of alcohol gel fuel (also known as chaffing dish fuel). Place one fuel can in the center of the oven and light fuel using a fireplace match. Keep oven door partially off**.** The first can will burn for 4 to 4.5 hours. Once first can is empty, light two cans at the same time, same as the first. These two cans will burn for 4 to 4.5 hours. When the pair of cans runs out of fuel, close the oven door and allow the oven to cool down overnight.

Caution: THE OVEN MAY STILL BE HOT!

Two cans of Sterno brand chaffing dish fuel are shown in the oven during the initial firing procedure.

Second Firing - 5 hours

NOT TO EXCEED 450° FARENGHEIT

Use a non-toxic fire starter to light a small pile of firewood, placed in the center of the oven. Each piece should be up to 8 inches long and 1 inch thick. **Flames must not be allowed to reach the dome of the oven**. Continue to maintain temperature by adding 1 or 2 pieces of the same size of firewood every 15 to 20 minutes for a total of 5 hours. At the end of the second firing, close the oven door, and allow the oven to cool down overnight.

Caution: THE OVEN MAY STILL BE HOT!

During the second firing, only small pieces of firewood are to be used, to take the oven to higher temperatures than those reached in the first firing. The small fire must be kept in the center of the oven floor and the flames should not be allowed to reach the top of the dome's interior.

You may now start to cook in your oven!

Please keep in mind that the oven is still tempering. Over the next few firings the performance characteristics of your oven will improve gradually. During this break in period, caution should be taken to gradually increase the heat with each fire for the first 5 to 6 times the oven is used. After these first few firings your oven will become fully ready for normal use!

Under normal operating conditions, small cracks will develop due to the heating and cooling process. These small cracks are normal and will not effect the performance or durability of your oven.

Resources

Chimney / Venting products:

Toll free at (866) 364-2996 or online at:
www.http://www.fogazzo.com/html/chimney.html

Gel Fuel, to start the oven the first time only!

Sterno Brand Chafing Dish fuel is available at Smart & Final or other restaurant/catering supply stores. You can use any of the different styles available, including wick models. What's important is the amount of time that they burn for and the temperature they heat the oven up to. The goal is to reach 200 degrees Fahrenheit for 4 hours.

Non-toxic fire starters:

Weber Fire Starters
Available nationally at most home centers.

Fatwood
Available at most home centers or from Fogazzo

Oven Basics

"Even if you own the worlds greatest espresso machine, it will not guarantee that you will get the best coffee in the world on your first try".

Cooking with real fire takes some getting used to, but don't be afraid to experiment. Many recipes need adjustments, but will work well. As a general rule, anything a conventional oven can do, a wood fired oven will do better.

Most splattering from baking, roasting or grilling will burn off. To avoid excessive splattering use cookware that is suitable for the food you are cooking. Wood fired ovens are very low maintenance. If you spill something on the oven floor, just wait for it to burn off. If you want to expedite this process, move some coals over the spill. Wait for it to burn off and sweep with an oven safe brush.

When you are through cooking. Close oven door to help extinguish any coals that are still burning. Allow oven to cool down slowly or overnight. Remove ashes using an ash vacuum or oven safe brush.

Always

- Allow 2 hours or more to bring your oven to temperature slowly.
- Add wood in 15 to 30 minute intervals.
- Add wood of similar size.
- Keep oven closed when not in use or unattended.
- Use safety gear to avoid injuries or burns

Never

- Leave a burning fire unattended.
- Allow cold water to hit a hot oven.
- Use tools that can chip or scrape your oven walls or floor.
- Drag heavy cookware that can scratch the oven floor
- Add too much wood at once.
- Build a large fire inside your oven.
- Dispose of hot coals in the trash.
- Use liquid fuels such as alcohol to start an oven.

Staring your oven



Use two medium size logs, one on the left and one on the right as props to hold up smaller pieces of kindling across them. Place a few pieces of kindling below perpendicular to the pieces above. Add one or two pieces of "Fatwood" or other nontoxic fire starter to this kindling. Using fireplace matches or a fireplace lighter, light the two pieces of "Fatwood".



After these pieces burn for about fifteen minutes, add a piece 3 to 4 inches thick and 12 to 16 inches long over the top of the kindling parallel to the larger pieces. Add a similar size piece every 15 to 20 minutes for the next 90 to 120 minutes.



After 90 to 120 minutes, the oven will have a nice sized pile of hot coals at it's center. Move them to either the left or the right, sweep the smaller pieces straight back and add a medium size piece of wood over the coals. You are now ready to cook. Always keep a small piece of wood burning to provide cooking light inside your oven.

Firewood

Quality firewood is essential for the operation of your wood fired oven. When buying firewood it is important to get your money's worth. Cord sizes are regulated and so firewood quantities must comply with industry standards. The best way to be sure you are getting what you are paying for is to measure your delivered firewood, which should be neatly stacked.

Quantities are as follows:

Full cord	=	4′ x 4′ x 8′	=	128 cu ft
½ cord	=	4′ x 4′ x 4′	=	64 cu ft
¼ cord	=	4′ x 4′ x 2′	=	32 cu ft

Firewood should be split, seasoned, and ready to burn, cut to approximately 12 to 16 inches in length and 2 to 4 inches in diameter. The following table contains a list of firewood recommended for use in wood fired ovens and the qualities associated with each species. The Firewood BTU (British Thermal Units) is the amount of heat energy produced by different types of wood when burned.

Species	Heat/ Cord (1,000,000 BTU'S)	Ease of Splitting	Smoke	Sparks	Coals	Fragrance	Overall Quality
Almond	23.5	Medium	Low	Few	Good	Good	Good
Apple	27	Medium	Low	Few	Good	Excellent	Excellent
Ash, Green	20	Easy	Low	Few	Good	Slight	Excellent
Ash, White	24.2	Medium	Low	Few	Good	Slight	Excellent
Avocado	17.5	Medium	Low	Few	Good	Slight	Good
Birch, Paper	20.8	Medium	Medium	Few	Good	Slight	Fair
Cherry, Black	20.4	Easy	Low	Few	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Hickory, Shagbark	27.5	Difficult	Low	Few	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Maple, Other	25.5	Easy	Low	Few	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Maple, Silver	19	Medium	Low	Few	Excellent	Good	Fair
Oak, Bur	26.2	Easy	Low	Few	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Oak, Red	24.6	Medium	Low	Few	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Oak, White	29.1	Medium	Low	Few	Excellent	Good	Excellent

Fogazzo Basic Wood Fired Oven Pizza Dough Recipe

This is a tried and true, wood fired oven pizza dough recipe for all occasions. It is easy to make, has a short proof time (4 hours) lasts for several days and freezes well.

Ingredients:

4 cups unbleached wheat flour
1 packet active dry yeast
1 egg
1 ¼ cups beer (or water)
8 tablespoons olive oil
¼ teaspoon salt

Preparation:

Beer makes the dough flakier and lighter, but if you prefer, water can be used in its place. Heat beer to 110 degrees, add yeast and wait 5 minutes to be sure it is activated (foamed). Add olive oil, egg and salt. Mix with a spoon or whisk. In a kitchen mixer, add liquid ingredients over flour and mix on lowest speed using a dough hook for 6 minutes. Increase speed one notch and mix for another 2 minutes. Place mixed dough on lightly oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap for 2 hours or until double in size. Remove from bowl, cut into 4 equal pieces, form into balls and place on lightly oiled tray. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.

Each dough ball yields a 14 inch medium pizza.

Dough not used after 2 days can be frozen for up to 3 months.






Fogazzo's Traditional Semolina Pizza Dough Recipe

Semolina adds complexity to this recipe, and makes it pliable enough for hand-tossing.

Ingredients:
2 cups warm water
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons salt
2½ cups semolina flour
1 packet active dry yeast
2 teaspoons sugar
2½ cups unbleached wheat flour

Preparation:
Heat water to 110 degrees, add yeast and wait 5 minutes to be sure it is activated (foamed). Add olive oil, sugar and salt. Mix with a spoon or whisk.
In a kitchen mixer, add liquid ingredients over flours and mix on lowest speed using a dough hook for 8 minutes. Increase speed one notch and mix for another 3 minutes. Place mixed dough on lightly oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap for 2 hours or until double in size. Remove from bowl, cut into 6 equal pieces, form into balls and place on lightly oiled tray. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.
Each dough ball yields a 14 inch medium pizza.

Option: This dough recipe can be slow proofed overnight in the refrigerator (retarded), and then used over several days.

Fogazzo's Neapolitan Pizza Dough

We like this dough recipe for thicker crusts. The double proofing adds bread like complexity and texture when proofed for at least 8 hours. **This dough should be hand-tossed only**.

Ingredients:
1 - cup milk
3/4 cup – water
1 tablespoon salt
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teaspoons active dry yeast (1 packet)
1 tablespoons olive oil
4 1/4 cups bread flour

Preparation:
Combine milk, water, salt, and sugar in a saucepan and heat to 110 degrees. Add yeast, and let the mixture stand 5 to 10 minutes to activate. Add oil and flour and mix for 8 minutes on low speed in a mixer with a dough hook. After mixing, cover the bowl with plastic wrap and proof for two hours in a warm area until doubled in size. Remove from bowl and punch down. Return to bowl and proof in warm area again until double in size. Remove from bowl, cut into 3 equal pieces (about 11.3 oz each), form into balls and place on lightly oiled tray. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.

Pizza Making Basics

Making pizza

Pizza making can easily be described as an art form. The search for the right combination of ingredients, the perfect dough recipe and the right techniques can take a lifetime to perfect. The great thing about pizza is that the journey to pizza Zen can be every bit as good as the final product. Some people say the perfect pizza is a myth, because as your abilities improve, so do your expectations. Whatever the case may be, the ultimate pizza is more a journey than a destination, so enjoy the trip and cherish all the friends you meet along the way.

Basic pizza making is very rudimentary. With a few basic techniques you can produce great results on your very first try. For the sake of simplicity we will describe the very basics. You are welcome to change toppings, etc to meet you needs. Do try to follow the techniques, however because if you master the basics outlined here, you will be well on your way to becoming a pizza master.

Basic tools

Flour bowl
Wood Pizza Peel
Bubble Popper
Cornmeal
Rolling pin
Aluminum Pizza Peel
Pizza Cutter or Knife

Basic Ingredients

Pizza dough
Cheese
Fresh Basil
Pizza sauce
Fresh Tomatoes
Olive Oil

Baking Pizza

Make sure the oven is up to pizza cooking temperature (650 to 750 degrees) and that the floor is clear of ambers and ash. You can do this by brushing the oven floor clean prior to placing the pizza in it. Take your freshly made pizza to the oven on your wood peel. Just before placing the pizza in the oven, gently shake your peel to make sure the dough has not stuck to it. If you are positive the dough in not stuck, place the pizza in the oven by putting the peel in the oven, touching the tip of the peel on the oven floor and then quickly pulling it out. Allow the pizza to cook for at least one minute before you try to turn it. This will allow the dough to get hard enough that the pizza can be turned. If any bubbles develop, pop them with the bubble popper. After one minute or when you see that the side closest to the fire is starting to brown, place your aluminum peel under the pizza and turn it 1/3 to 1/2 turn.

Pizza Making Step by Step (1 of 3)

Have all your tools and work area ready.

Dust a clean surface with flour. A large cutting board is ideal.

Place a dough ball into the flour bowl to cover it with flour

Make sure both sides and edges are well dusted with flour.

Place dusted dough ball on center of cutting board and, start flattening it with the tips of your fingers.

Work your way around the dough ball flattening it while trying to keep it round

Flip the dough over and work the back side with your fingers and the flats of your hands as well.

Start to roll out the dough with the rolling pin.

Turn the dough 1/4 turn after 3 to 4 passes with the rolling pin. This will ensure that the dough stays round.

Pizza Making Step by Step (2 of 3)

Continue rolling the dough flat with the rolling pin using gentle but firm pressure

Turn the dough 1/4 turn every 3 to 4 passes to make sure the dough stays round.

Roll out until dough reaches 12 to 14 inches in diameter.

Place a small amount of corn meal on a wood pizza peel. The cornmeal will ensure that the dough will not stick to the peel.

Place the rolled out dough on the peel with cornmeal.

Place two spoonfuls of sauce at the center of the dough and work the sauce with the spoon toward the edges.

Use a circular motion to push the sauce to the edge of the dough.

Next place grated Mozzarella cheese evenly on the pizza.

Use the tips of your fingers to help spread the cheese evenly.

Pizza Making Step by Step (3 of 3)

Place the toppings on the pizza.

First you flat meats like pepperoni or ham.

Next your flat vegetables like green peppers, onions, etc.

Lastly place your bulky vegetables or fruit, like mushrooms or pineapple.

Make sure the oven floor is clean by brushing it first. Using both hands on the peel handle, gently shake you pizza to make sure it is not stuck to the peel

To place pizza in the oven, put the peel into the oven to about the middle. Touch the tip of the peel on the oven floor and pull it out with a quick motion.

Watch for bubbles which may form along the edges of the pizza and pop them with your bubble popper as soon as they form.

Wait for one minute for the crust to firm up before attempting to turn it using your aluminum peel. You must turn the pizza 2 to 3 times during baking to make sure that all sides cook evenly.

At pizza baking temperature (600 to 700 degrees) a pizza will bake in 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the pizza from the oven with your aluminum peel.

Grilling - Roasting - Baking

Wood fired cooking can yield very satisfying results with minimal effort. Getting used to the various temperatures and how to achieve and maintain them is a small challenge you can quickly master. Temperatures in an oven can vary drastically from one area of the oven to another. The back is always hotter, the front near the door, always cooler. Rotating the dishes will also help to cook food more evenly. Grilling is done at higher temperatures (400 to 600˚) in very little time. Baking is generally done with mid temperatures (350 to 450˚) and roasting is done on lower temperatures (250 to 350˚) over longer periods of time. Gaining temperature means to add more wood. Losing temperature means waiting for the oven to cool down. You should never have to remove coals or wood from the oven during one days worth of cooking. Removing unburned wood, coals or ash should only be done after the oven has cooled down, preferably a day after cooking, or prior to starting the oven the next time it is to be used.

Roasting

Roasts can be done on a rack or pan. If you are using a rack, place a drip pan under it to catch all the drippings. You can roast ribs, a whole chicken or a small turkey, on a rack. Prime rib, tri tip and other cuts of beef, lamb, pork, poultry and fish can be done in a roasting pan. Avoid dragging cookware on the oven floor as this can damage the tiles over time. Roasting is done at the lowest oven temperatures. As low as 175 degrees. To keep the oven at lower temperatures, place the oven door touching one side of the door opening and leave 1 to 2 inches open on the opposite side. This will reduce the amount of air the oven can take in, and will keep the fire burning low and slow.

Baking

Baking is done at medium temperatures with the oven door open. You can bake pasta, breads, desserts or any other recipe that needs to be baked in an oven. Most recipes will greatly benefit from the flavors that are generated by a wood fire. Recipes that need to be in the oven for more than 15 to 20 minutes may need to be covered with a lid or aluminum foil during most of the baking. The lid or foil should be removed a few minutes before the dish is done to allow for browning. You may also need to turn the dish at least once during the baking process to ensure even cooking.

Grilling

This refers to the use of a grate or grill inside your oven. The easiest way is to place a small grill grate over two bricks. Be sure to use proper tools to carefully place the bricks and grate into the oven. Once the grate is in place, rake enough coals under the grate to fill the area between the bricks. Grilling in a wood fired oven is very fast. This is because wood fired ovens actually generate three types of heat, which are: Conductive, Radiant and Convective. Because of the three types of heat acting to cook food, the process is extremely fast. Chicken or steaks up to 1.5 inches thick will cook in approximately 2 minutes per side. This is also a great way to grill fish or vegetables to perfection.

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