Correct Flour Is Magical!

Free Guide

SFIDA PIZZA

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Hello from Claudia!

Since you have arrived at my website, you must be either a true Neapolitan pizza lover and/or you tend to be a perfectionist even in the kitchen, or perhaps you are just looking for answers to improve your pizza.

Then this guide was written just for you!

You are going to discover one of the secrets to make authentic Neapolitan pizza.

This secret is in the selection of the flour you'll be using. I will guide you to know the characteristics/ parameters on how to choose the correct flour specifically for pizza.

Did you know that **the right flour is magical** in pizza making?

THE CHARACTERISTICS/PARAMETERS TO LOOK FOR

In the year 2010 Neapolitan pizza obtained "Traditional Specialty Guaranteed" (T.S.G.). This means its production process is strictly determined by an official Regulation. This Regulation states that the flour to be used in making pizza must have the following characteristics and parameters.

CHARACTERISTICS	PARAMETERS
TIPO (Type)	"00" / "0"
W (Strength)	220 - 380
PROTEINE (Protein content)	11% - 12.5%
P/L (Elasticity)	0.50 - 0.70
ASSORBIMENTO (Absorption)	55% – 62%
STABILITÀ (Stability)	4 – 12 min
FALLING NUMBER	300 – 400 sec

If you would like to have advice on some brands that I have personally tested, go to the dedicated page at the end of this guide: CLICK HERE!

Let me explain further the meaning of these characteristics in the following pages.

1. TYPE OF FLOUR (OR ASH CONTENT)

Italy classifies flour according to the degree on how much refining has been done to it.

Refining the flour means removing the bran (the outer coating of the grain.)

The "traces of bran" are quantified by measuring the percentage of ashes in the flour.

But what are these ashes?

Ashes are the mineral salts left in the flour when burned for 6 hours at 550°C (1022°F).

Mineral salts, in fact, don't burn and are mainly concentrated in the bran. In this manner they are used in classifying the flour by types.

If the type of flour (i.e. type"00" or type"0") is not specified on the label, then refer to the ash content.

To make pizza, **type"00" or type"0"** flour is needed. It is equivalent to a maximum ash content of 0.55% (type "00") and 0.65% (type "0").

2. STRENGTH (DESIGNATED BY: "W")

The flour strength is shown with the letter "**W**". The stronger the flour, the more it will be:

- **Able to absorb water.**
- **Suitable for long leavening processes.**
- **Able to retain carbon dioxide,** a natural by-product of the leavening process.

The flour strength is roughly classified into **4 groups**:

- **Weak flours (< 170 "W")** (less than 170 "W"): they are used for products that require a short leavening period, like breadsticks, biscuits and pastries. These flours are able to absorb an amount of water around 50% of its own weight.
- **Medium strength flours (180 -260 "W"):** they are used for medium-leavening products. These flours are able to absorb an amount of water between 55% and 65% of its own weight.

- **Strong flours (270 – 350 "W")**: they are used for some types of breads and products with high leavening processes particularly such as "pandoro", "panettone", croissants. They absorb between 65% and 75% of water.
- **Manitoba (> 350 "W")** (higher than 170 "W")**:** they owe their name to the Canadian region of Manitoba, where a variety of wheat was originally cultivated. They are high-strength flours. They are usually mixed with other flours in order to increase their strength, and are used for long leavening processes. They can absorb up to 90% of water.

Even though the Regulation states that you could use a flour with "**W" between 220 and 380**, from my own experience, I suggest that you use a flour with a "**W" between 260-280.**

3. PROTEIN CONTENT

Generally, the higher the protein content, the stronger is the flour.

In wheat flours the protein content is a confirmation as to the strength of the parameter "W".

If the strength is not specified on the label, make sure the flour has at least a protein content **between 11% and 12.5%.**

4. ELASTICITY "P/L"

The "P/L" characteristic becomes important when establishing and foreseeing how much your dough will be elastic.

A well-balanced characteristic of dough has a "P/L" equal to 0.5. That means:

- **If the "P/L" < 0.5** (less than 0.5) the dough will have low elasticity, it will be very pliable and it could easily rip.
- **If "P/L" = 0.5** (is 0.5) the dough will have average elasticity, it will be resilient enough but at the same time easy to stretch.
- **If "P/L" > 0.5** (more than 0.5) the dough will have high elasticity: it will be firm and will tend to spring back to its original shape.

For Neapolitan pizza, you must have a "**P/L" between 0.5 and 0.7**. This means your dough will stretch easily and at the same time will most likely not tear.

5. ABSORPTION

You can also read on the label of the flour its ability to absorb water, usually expressed as a percentage of weight.

For Neapolitan pizza the absorption should vary **between 55% and 62%.**

6. STABILITY

Kneading for too long can make the dough lose consistency and softens.
Stability shows the kneading time, after which, the dough starts to break down.
The stronger the flour, the longer its stability time.
Generally speaking:

- a weak flour has a stability time of **< 10 minutes** (less than 10 minutes,)
- a medium strength flour has a stability time **between 10 and 16 minutes**,
- a strong flour has a stability time that can reach as far as **20 minutes or more**.

The Regulation for Neapolitan pizza, suggests flours to have a stability time **between 4 and 12 min.**
My suggestion is to choose a flour with **at least 10 minutes stability time.**

7. FALLING NUMBER

The sugars available in the flour are the "fuel" in the fermentation process (food for yeast.)
Sugars are mostly derived from the action of some enzymes (called "amylase," already present in the grain.)
The Falling Number is a parameter that tells us how "fast" these enzymes react:

- **< 200 seconds** (less than 200 sec.) The enzymes are very active: the leavening will be quick; the dough could lose the air-bubbles and collapse on itself. When this happens the finished-product will have a damp and sticky inner structure.
- **= 250 seconds** (equal to 250 sec.) The flour has a well-balanced value.
- **> 300 seconds** (greater than 300 sec.) Enzymes are not very active, leavening will be slower and you may get a flat product, dry and with a compact inner structure.

The recommended flour for Neapolitan pizza, requires a long leavening period, it needs a Falling Number **between 300 and 400 seconds.**

SOME ITALIAN BRANDS of FLOURS

In all the years I've been making pizza, I have bought flours available at my local supermarkets and have even ordered professional flours on-line. These the ones that have given me the best results:

Garofalo *"Tutto il buono della farina – W 260"* (translation: "*All the goodness of flour – W260*".)

At the moment, this is the flour for general use with the most complete label. I have tried it and I think it's very good, comparable to professional flours.

Polselli *"Classica."*

It is very famous brand among pizza makers. It is also sold in 1 kg and 5 kg packs. I suggest you the **"Classica"** label**.** Compared to other flours, when I use it, I get a dough richer in bubbles.

Caputo *"Pizzeria."*

Perhaps one of the most used flours in pizzerias. I recommend using the "**Pizzeria**" label, however, for what I know, it's sold only in 25 kg blue packaging.

Small packages (1 kg or 5 kg) are also available, but the flour is stronger (W 300 - 320). In this case, it needs a longer leavening time (at low temperatures.)

Molino Quaglia "Petra3."

It is a very cutting-edge company in grain selection and milling technology. They produce a great variety of flours, but I suggest that you try their label, "**Petra 3**".

It's time to go make your pizza! Select a suitable flour and **let's start having fun!!!**

BYE, FOR NOW!!!

SUMMARY

In order to make an authentic Neapolitan pizza, flour with the following characteristics must be used:

CHARACTERISTICS	PARAMETERS
TIPO (Type)	"00" / "0"
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TO KNOW MORE

WHAT IS GLUTEN?

The stronger the flour, the higher is the amount of gluten that will develop in the process.

The gluten is formed essentially in the mixing stage, when two proteins, which are contained in the flour (glutenin and gliadin), combine with each other through water.

The richer the flour with these proteins, the greater is the amount of water it absorbs and the greater is the amount of gluten it develops.

Therefore: strength, protein content, water absorption are characteristics closely linked together.

As you knead the dough, gluten forms a "network".

This network creates a lattice, which traps the carbon dioxide produced during the leavening process, and allows the dough to rise. The tighter is the lattice, the longer the carbon dioxide remains trapped.

HOW AND WHERE TO STORE FLOUR

a. Be sure to keep the flour in a place with these features:

- Dry and cool (moisture and heat promote the development of molds and bugs.)
- Away from sunlight and drafts (the flour has its own moisture that should be preserved.)
- Where there are no vegetables and fruits that could contaminate the flour with bugs and possibly odors.
- In a place where there are no detergents or chemical substances from which the flour may absorb odors and toxins.

b. Keep flour packs off floors and away from walls.

c. Make sure to properly reseal the package after each use.

d. Do not buy excessive amounts: buy only as much flour as you can consume within a reasonable time.