

## Baked Bones with Blood

Either pick up some pre-made pizza dough from the grocery store (I see it everywhere now, usually in the refrigerator section near the mozzarella cheese and/or pepperoni) or make your own from your favorite [pizza dough recipe](#).

Once you have your dough made and it's risen until double in size (which it will have already done before you bought it at the store if you're going pre-made), you have some decisions to make. Do you want crunchy bones or soft bones?

That might seem like a silly questions. Crunchy bones, of course! Whose bones are soft? Except, if you make crunchy bones, they won't look like those picturesque bones shown above. They'll have to brown more in the oven and you'll have to make slightly more impressionistic, Burton-esque bone shapes, like so:

Personally, I think the crunchy bones are more delicious but kids seem to prefer the soft and obviously, the crunchy ones might need more explanation. Still, if you want to go crunchy, you'll preheat the oven to 350F and roll your once-risen pizza dough out to about 1/4 inch thick.

Now, take a pizza cutter and cut it into strips.

Lay the strips on a sheet tray lined with a silicon mat (parchment paper works, too, but often gives the underside a wrinkly texture as the moisture from the dough warps the paper in the cooking process) and fold the ends under to create the bony, knobby ends. As much as you can, shape the ends to look bony. Allow the dough to rest about ten minutes before you pop them in the oven, three trays at a time (a batch of pizza dough will make a lot of bread sticks—put unused dough in the fridge between batches or save it for a pizza), rotating the trays every fifteen minutes for about forty-five minutes. (Resting the dough will allow the glutens in the dough to relax a little—relaxed dough holds its shape better than dough that's just been worked.) If your bones are multi-sized like mine, you might need to remove some of the smaller bones before the bigger bones are done cooking; keep an eye on them.

If you're going for soft bones, allow the dough to rise a second time, doubling in size, before preheating the oven (350 again) and rolling it out and using a bone-shaped cookie cutter (or dog treat cutter) to cut out your lovely, perfect-shaped bones. You won't get as many bones out of your dough this way, though you can wad up your dough, throw it in the fridge, and bring it back out a couple hours later with the hope of rolling out more (though personally, I'd just use it for a pizza).

You'll have fewer trays and it's okay if these ones puff a little before going in the oven, so bake one or two trays at a time, keeping the bread sticks as far from the heat as possible and using an empty sheet pan on the top rack as a shield against browning.

Bake for 30-40 minutes, until the bottoms of the bread sticks are brown and they look nice and fluffy.

Serve with your favorite [marinara sauce](#)—I mean, blood. Or, if it's chunky marinara, blood and guts.