

# Flammkuchen - flaming good pizza

Flammkuchen is a sort of pizza from Southern Germany and the Alsace region of France, traditionally covered with crème fraîche, sliced onion and Kaiserfleisch. Flammkuchen literally means flame cake and when baked in a hot wood oven the exposed edges are often licked by the flames to a pleasing charred crispness. In the cool of an Autumn evening after a day of foraging in the forest for chestnuts and mushrooms a Flammkuchen is a delicious treat. At least that is my memory of Flammkuchen. While translating that experience back to Melbourne sans the misty forest, wheat beer and warmth of a wood oven may lack some Teutonic romance there is still a lot to love about a thin pizza with creme fraiche and streaky smoked bacon. The lack of mozzarella cheese also gives Flammkuchen a much lighter taste if not less calories. To avoid the prospect of Flammkuchen with raw onion I caramelize the sliced onion on the stove beforehand because the maximum heat from a domestic oven is never going to be as great as a wood fired oven. Prosciutto, pancetta or guanciale can be used but to be authentic a smokey bacon, like Kaiserfleisch is best. Another key to success is taking the time to let the dough rest all day or for at least a couple of hours. This will give you plenty of time to go out and forage during the day and also result in a light, bubbly dough that will crisp up nicely. Serve with a wheat beer or a fruity wine.



## Kaiserfleisch

Kaiserfleisch can be bought from [Walma's Continental Butchers](#) in Bayswater, [Uncle's Smallgoods](#) in Dandenong or [Queen Victoria Market](#)

- 450 g bread flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp freeze-dried yeast
- 300 ml tepid water
- 15 ml milk
- 30 ml olive oil
- 200 ml crème fraîche
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 100 g Kaiserfleisch
- nutmeg (optional)

Mix the salt and flour well. Combine the yeast with the water, milk and oil and add to the flour. Beat for 10 minutes in a mixer using a dough hook – the mix should be soft and sticky but gradually come away from the sides of the bowl as it mixes. After mixing dust lightly with flour – the dough should

be soft and silky and easy to handle. Alternatively you can knead vigorously by hand. Place in a bowl and cover with cling film (so the surface does not dry out) and leave to rise until it is double in size. Knock back the dough and shape into a ball and leave to prove for several hours or overnight in the fridge (remembering to remove it a couple of hours before baking to come to room temperature again).

Caramelize the onions in olive oil in a saucepan with the lid on to initially soften the onions. Stir regularly to avoid burning the onions (remember the onions have sugars with can easily catch) and then cook until golden with the lid off. Set aside. Cut the Kaiserfleisch into thin strips. Heat the oven to 220°C. Lightly oil a pizza tray. Divide the dough into two and shape one ball, preferably by hand, to fit the tray, being careful to retain some of the bubbles in the edges of the dough. Smear the flattened dough with half the crème fraîche and then sprinkle with half the onion and Kaiserfleisch. Grate some nutmeg over the top. Bake for approximately 10 minutes. When done, slide the Flammkuchen onto a wooden board, cut into slices and eat immediately. Repeat.