

Ooni Koda Pizza Oven

Pizza Al Fresco



Review by **Michael Yannon**

It's been said a watched pot won't boil. Those physics aren't at play here because watching the Ooni Koda bake a pizza is like watching a time-lapse film. As a matter of fact, watching it bake is almost a must considering how quickly this powerful little oven cranks out the pies. The company touts an amazing 60 second average cook time but our times were even better. And its portability makes it ideal for many outdoor activities.

Okay, a couple of things to keep in mind. First, since shipping flammable liquids is not wise (and illegal), you'll need a propane tank. Secondly, the Ooni Koda is

designed for outdoor use only (so don't be cranking it up in your studio apartment). Finally, use an oven mitt or glove whenever you insert or remove pizzas (learned this the hard way).

Assembly, if you could call it that, is extending the units three legs, inserting the cooking stone and attaching the propane tank. Ooni is also kind enough to include a pizza paddle (a.k.a. pizza peel). After opening the propane valve, turn the start knob counterclockwise and with a soft click, the Ooni roars to life. You'll want to allow at least 15 minutes for the oven to heat up, allowing the stone insert to reach its max temperature, ensuring a crispy pizza crust.



The pizzas we made ourselves netted the best results!

For test purposes, we tried a variety of pizzas, including frozen, take and bake and those of our own creation and here's what we learned: Papa Murphy's smallest pizza is 12". The largest the Ooni Koda accommodates is 10". Also, the conventional oven-

safe cardboard - their pizzas come on for baking - was toast within seconds of hitting the 1000 degree inferno. Learn from my mistakes, people. And although we trimmed their pizzas and made them work, Papa Murphy's is not an ideal choice for the Koda. However, they do sell ready made pizza dough.

It's best to completely thaw frozen pizzas. We tried two brands of frozen and while both took longer they still browned much quicker than a conventional oven. They were also cold in the center. And remember, if you do thaw, do it in the fridge. Raw dough is hard to handle at room temp.

We achieved the best results with pizzas we made ourselves, keeping the pies small (about 8") and the crust thin, but running the gamut on toppings and sauces. Regardless of design, each mini pizza was done within a minute, browned evenly with a crispy crust and nicely charred toppings. We also made quesadillas and toasted grill cheese sandwiches with excellent results. The Ooni is reminiscent of top broilers, like the Salamander, used in professional kitchens. It browns that fast.

The Koda's small size and portability make it ideal for just about any outdoor gathering. I believe it will find a prominent place in most outdoor kitchens or in any situation where a propane grill is already present. Tailgating comes to mind. It may not be practical for the rough-it campers but glampers may consider it a must-have.

Earlier I mentioned something about a 1000-degree inferno. Well, I exaggerated a bit, it only reaches a max temp of 932 (500C). Hotter by far than most grills, so at the very least the same common sense rules apply; respect the fact that burns are possible, keep the kiddies at a safe distance, protect yourself.

For its convenience, portability and cooking power, we highly recommend the Ooni Koda. The good folks at Ooni are starting a pizza revolution, offering several different options including its original wood pellet oven, The Ooni 3, and the Ooni Pro, which uses gas or pellets for fuel. Check them out at www.ooni.com.

If you're giving an Ooni oven as a gift, consider the Man Crate Pizza Grilling



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