

How To Make Gluten Free Pizza That Doesn't Taste Like Cardboard

Pizza is actually a pretty simple food to cook. You'd never know that though, since most of us are accustomed to paying someone else to make our pizza, or at least our pizza crust, for us. When gluten free frozen pizzas first became available in our area, I tried them. They were not good, to say the least. I've also tried Mellow Mushroom's gluten free pizzas. They are alright, but not as good as the pizza that I can make at home. So, in the interest of making sure that the gluten free world has good pizza to eat, let's talk about what makes for a good gluten free pizza.

Ingredients: The basic ingredients in a pizza crust are flour, salt, sugar, water and yeast. I use my GF flour mix for these pizza recipes. You can use either the regular GF mix or the soy-free GF mix. I've started adding the weight of the flour to the recipes, for those of you who choose to weigh your flours.

If you're unable to use corn, then substitute tapioca starch for the corn starch and almond flour for the masa harina. With this substitutions the flour becomes less absorbent, so you'll need less water than the recipes calls for. Just be sure to add the water to the flour gradually until you get to the right consistency.

For those of you who avoid sugar, but do use other natural sweeteners, you can substitute an appropriate amount of another sweetener. If you can not use any sweeteners at all, then just add the yeast directly to the flour without proofing it. The yeast will activate and began to do its work without the sugar; it will just not do it as fast.

Yeast is not actually a required ingredient in pizza. The St. Louis Style thin crust pizza uses baking powder as the leavening agent. If you cannot use yeast, then try that recipes. It's very good.

Equipment: You don't have to have any special equipment to make gluten free pizza, though there are some items that are nice to have. The first of these is a pizza stone. Pizza stones soak up the heat from your oven and apply it directly to the bottom of your pizza crust. This can go a long way towards getting a nice, crispy crust. If you don't have a pizza stone, then you can bake your pizza on top of a baking sheet that you have turned upside down too. I have a baking stone, but still use a baking sheet frequently, since I like to bake two pizzas for our weekly pizza night.

A pizza peel is a nice tool for moving the pizza dough to the stone and taking it out after it's baked. You don't have to have it, but it does mean that you can get the pizza in and out of the oven more quickly which allows more of the hot air to stay in the oven. If you don't have one (and I don't) then watch the Regular Crust video to see how I move my dough from the counter to the hot baking stone.

If you're making one of the rolled out pizza crusts, then you'll also need a rolling pin. As you'll see in one of the videos, my rolling pin is getting quite old and we nearly broke it while we were making this video. When, I replace it I'm going to get a good heavy wooden rolling pin that will hopefully be indestructible.

The last piece of equipment that you need is a hot oven. And I mean hot! Commercial pizza ovens bake pizza at upwards of 900 degrees F, so crank your oven as high as it will go. Even if the recipe doesn't call for heat that high, feel free to experiment with a number of different temperatures.

Types of Pizza:

In this lesson, I'll show you how to make rolled out pizza crusts and deep dish pizzas. I'll also give you recipes for two rolled out pizza crusts – regular and thin-crust, and two pan pizzas. One of the pan pizzas is a Chicago style deep dish pizza, the other is a more traditional crust, but you pat it out into a pan rather than rolling it out with a rolling pin.

There are a couple of important differences to note between the different pizzas. Of the rolled out pizzas, the traditional regular crust is leavened with yeast, while the St. Louis thin-style is leavened with baking powder. The St. Louis thin-style recipe also uses less flour, and thus makes less dough. So, when you roll the thin-crust dough out into a 12" circle you have a thinner crust than when you roll the traditional crust out to a 12" circle.

The Pat-in-the-Pan pizza is the traditional crust cooked in a pan. Even though the Chicago deep dish pizza is also cooked in a pan, the finished product is completely different. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the Chicago style dough goes through two risings which gives the yeast plenty of time to permeate the dough with a wonderful flavor. Second, the Chicago style dough is laminated with butter so that the crust is somewhat flaky. Finally, the Chicago style dough is an entirely different consistency from the Traditional style dough. It is much more like a gluten free bread dough, which makes sense when you consider that the crust should end up being somewhat like bread.

Other Notes:

I like to bake my pizza crust on the stone for a few minutes and then take it out and top it. By doing this, the crust gets to bake longer than the toppings and you get a crisper crust without burning your toppings.

Placing your oven rack towards the bottom of the oven will mean that more heat goes to the bottom of the pizza than to the top. This is a good thing.

If your tomato sauce seems to be making your crust soggy, then top the crust with cheese before adding the sauce. The cheese will melt and provide a protective moisture barrier.

All of the crust recipes are naturally dairy free, or can be made dairy free. If you also need to have a cheese-free pizza, then I suggest that you browse a few vegan blogs for pizza recipes. There are a number of non-dairy cheese alternatives and I think that you'll find that many vegan cooks have perfected the non-cheese pizza.

Gluten Free Pizza Crust Recipe: Pat in the Pan Pizza

Gluten Free Pizza Crust

(Yield: Enough pizza for two adults, if your goal is to be very full. This may be enough for three or four if you're serving salad as well)

1 Tbsp. Rapid Rise yeast

1 1/3 c. water, warm

1 tsp. sugar

1 1/3 c. brown rice flour (I use Bob's Red Mill)

1 c. corn starch

2 tsp. xanthan gum

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp. fennel seed

1/2 tsp. rosemary (dried)

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1/2 tsp. oregano

2 tsp. olive oil

2 tsp. cider vinegar

Pizza Sauce

1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes (w/ Italian seasonings)

1/2 of a 6 oz. can of tomato paste

1/2 tsp. oregano

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1/2 tsp. fennel seed

1/2 tsp. rosemary

6 fresh basil leaves, minced

Start by putting all of the ingredients for the pizza sauce, except for the basil, into a saucepan and heat over medium low. The sauce should simmer while you make the crust and prepare the toppings. We'll come back to it when later after the spices have had time to get happy.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Combine the water, sugar and yeast in a small mixing bowl and set it aside to proof.

Combine the brown rice flour, corn starch, xanthan gum and spices in a larger mixing bowl. If the rosemary is not crushed, then I usually chop it up a bit with a knife before I put it in the bowl.

Add the oil and vinegar to the yeast mixture, which should have some air bubbles by now. Then pour all of that into the flour mixture and stir well. Once you've done this, the dough will be somewhat sticky, and now is a good time to sprinkle some extra rice flour on it. Now that the rice flour is cutting down on the stickiness, form the dough into a ball and let it sit while you get your pans ready.

If you're using pans or a cookie sheet to cook the crusts, you will need to grease them, so that the pizza crust does not stick. Spread butter, olive oil, shortening, or cooking spray on the pan and then sprinkle a bit of rice flour on top of that. (I use one round and one square cake pan for the pizzas. To me, it's easier than rolling it out so that I can use my pizza stone. But if you have a pizza stone, feel free to use that, or a cookie sheet.)

Split the ball of dough into two pieces – one for each pan. Starting from the middle of the dough, use your fingers to press down on the dough and spread it out towards the edges of the pan. I usually work my

way from the center to the edges in a circular pattern. When you get the dough to the edges, continue to push the dough up onto the side of the pan, so that you will have a nice crust.

Pop the crusts into the hot oven for 8 minutes. While they are cooking, add the basil to the sauce and prep your pizza toppings. Tonight we used diced onion, diced bell pepper, mushrooms, and black olives.

Take the crusts out of the oven. While they cool for a second, use your stick blender to puree the pizza sauce if you do not want it to be chunky.

Drizzle some olive oil onto your crusts and spread it over them evenly. (This will keep the pizza sauce from making your crust soggy.). Now add the toppings starting with the pizza sauce and ending with the cheese.

Pop the pizza back into the oven for 10 – 15 minutes. The time is not specific, you just want the pizzas to stay in the oven until the cheese starts to brown a bit. Pull the pizzas out, cut, and serve.

Gluten Free Pizza Crust Recipe – Traditional Crust

If you want to replicate delivery -style pizza, this is the pizza crust to start with. I've included ingredient amounts for medium or large style pizzas, so that you can choose the right amount for your family and your pizza stone.

Gluten Free Pizza Crust

(2 medium pizzas)

1 Tbsp. Rapid Rise yeast	2 tsp. xanthan gum
1 1/3 c. water	1 tsp salt
1 tsp. sugar	2 tsp. olive oil
2 1/3 c. Gluten Free Flour Mix	2 tsp. cider vinegar

Gluten Free Pizza Crust

(2 large pizzas)

2 Tbsp. Rapid Rise yeast	4 tsp. xanthan gum
2 2/3 c. water	2 tsp salt
2 tsp. sugar	4 tsp. olive oil
4 2/3 c. Gluten Free Flour Mix	4 tsp. cider vinegar

Cooking Instructions:

Put your pizza stone into the oven and preheat the oven to 500 degrees. Combine warm water with the sugar and yeast in a small mixing bowl. Let your liquid mixture sit and "proof" while you get the dry ingredients ready.

Combine the flour mix, salt and xanthan gum.

Add the oil and vinegar to the yeast mixture, which should have some air bubbles by now. Then add all of liquid ingredients into the flour mixture and mix well with your hands. Place the dough onto a heavily floured rolling board (I use rice flour) and knead the dough a few times, working in the rice flour until you dough is pliable and not sticky.

Separate the dough into halves and roll one half out into a circle that is approximately 1/8" thick. Move the crust to the hot pizza stone and bake at 500 degrees until the top of the crust gets just a hint of color. Remove the crust from the oven. Add all of your toppings, and then put back in the oven to bake until your toppings look well done (e.g. cheese starts to brown). Repeat from step 6 for the 2nd half of dough.

Gluten Free Pizza Crust Recipe – St. Louis Style Thin Crust

St. Louis Style Pizza is a crisp, but also tender, thin-crust pizza that is traditionally cut into squares. The crust is leavened with baking powder instead of yeast, so it's perfect for those of you who need to be gluten free and yeast free. St. Louisans top their pizza with Provel cheese, which is generally only available in the St. Louis area.

This recipe is a gluten free adaptation of a Cook's Illustrated recipe.

Dough:

2 cups (9 oz.) [Mary's GF or GF, SF Flour Mix](#)
2 Tbsp. cornstarch
2 tsp. xanthan gum
2 tsp. sugar
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt

1 1/8 c. water
2 Tbsp. olive oil

Sauce:

8 oz. tomato sauce
3 Tbsp. tomato paste
1 Tbsp. sugar
2 tsp. oregano

Whisk the sauce ingredients together in a small bowl and set aside.

Move one of the racks to the next to lowest position in your oven and place a pizza stone or inverted baking sheet on the rack. Preheat your oven to 475 degrees F.

For the crust, combine the flour, cornstarch, salt, sugar and baking powder in a large bowl. Add the water and oil and stir until the dough starts to come together. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead a few times until the dough is smooth and pliable.

Divide the dough into two equal pieces. Roll out one piece of dough into a 12" circle and move it to the hot pizza stone or baking sheet. Bake the crust for a few minutes until it is very slightly browned.

Remove the crust from the oven. Top with sauce and cheese and then put it back into the oven to bake until the cheese has browned on top.

Gluten Free Pizza Crust Recipe – Chicago Style Deep Dish

Chicago Style Gluten Free Pizza

Chicago Style Deep Dish pizza is a creature unto itself. The crust is supposed to be crisp, flaky, and tender all at once. It should also have a distinct buttery and yeasty flavor. Work is required to get these results, but it's worth it. I usually scoff at the people who say that pizza crust should be the best part of the pizza. I really like toppings! But, this crust made me understand what those people were talking about.

You'll need some extra tools to make this pizza – aluminum foil, cooking spray, and either a spatula, basting brush, or large spoon. This dough is really soft, and very hard to manipulate. All of the tools above will make it easier (as you'll see in the accompany video which I HIGHLY recommend that you watch) but this is not a recipe for beginners.

This recipe is a gluten free adaptation of the Chicago Deep Dish pizza in the January 2010 issue of Cook's Illustrated.

Dough

14.75 oz. (3.25 cups) Mary's [Gluten Free Flour Mix](#)
2.75 oz. (1/2 cup) gluten free cornmeal
2 teaspoons xanthan gum
2 1/4 tsp. rapid-rise yeast
2 tsp. sugar
1 1/2 tsp. salt
2 1/4 c. (18 oz.) water
2 Tbsp. oil
3 Tbsp. butter, melted
4 Tbsp. butter, softened

Sauce

28 oz. diced tomatoes, drained
3 Tbsp. tomato paste
1 Tbsp. sugar
2 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. salt

Toppings

1 lb. mozzarella, shredded
1/4 c. grate Parmesan cheese

Dough Instructions: Mix flour, cornmeal, salt, sugar, and yeast in bowl in a large mixing bowl. Add water, melted butter, and 2 Tbsp oil and mix with a hand mixer or stand mixer for 3 – 4 minutes. The dough will be very soft – much like gluten free bread dough. Be sure to watch the video to see the actual consistency in case you need to adjust the amount of water.

Transfer the dough to an oiled bowl; cover with Saran wrap; and let rise on the countertop for approximately 1 hour.

Now, cover your rolling area with aluminum foil and spray the foil with cooking spray (make sure it's GF). Turn the dough out onto this surface and then roll it into 15- by 12-inch rectangle using a rolling pin (or

your hands if necessary). Spread the softened butter over the surface of the dough, leaving a 1/2-inch border along the edges.

Now, roll the dough into a tight cylinder. With the seam side down, flatten the cylinder into a 18- by 4-inch rectangle and then cut the rectangle in half crosswise. Take half the dough and fold it into thirds and then pinch the seams together to form a ball. Repeat with the remaining half.

Return the dough balls to the oiled bowl and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Put the dough in the refrigerator to rise for another hour.

Coat two 9-inch round cake pans with 2 tablespoons olive oil each. Slide a dough ball out of the oiled bowl and into one of the pans. Lightly press dough into pan, working into corners and 1 inch up sides. Repeat with the remaining dough ball.

For each pizza, sprinkle 2 cups mozzarella evenly over surface of dough. Spread 1 1/4 cups tomato sauce over cheese and sprinkle 2 tablespoons Parmesan over sauce. Bake until crust is golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes. Remove pizza from the oven and let the pizza rest for 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

Sauce Instructions: Combine all of the sauce ingredients into a medium-size pot over medium heat. Once the sauce is bubbling use a stick blender to puree part of the tomatoes. (Alternatively, remove half of the sauce to a blender or food processor, give it a whiz, and then return this sauce to the pot).