

Gluten-Free Pizza Dough

Adapted from *Pizza on the Grill* (Taunton Press, expanded edition) by Bob Blumer & Elizabeth Karmel.

Neither myself, or my *Pizza on the Grill* co-author are gluten intolerant (though we intolerant in many other ways!) but we are both well versed in cooking around a myriad of allergies, intolerances, and plain old dislikes). When we were asked to review the original 50 grilled pizza recipes from the first edition of our book, to determine which ones could be adapted to a gluten-free crust, we were prepared to unearth a veritable Pandora's box. Much to our surprise—and delight—we discovered that virtually all of the ingredients we called for in the original edition of this book are either intrinsically gluten-free, or *can* be with a simple substitution of brands.

When it comes to pizza on the grill, *the difference between gluten-rich and gluten-free is almost entirely in the crust*. Consequently, our main challenge was to develop the best-possible gluten-free crust. We started by testing all of the widely distributed brands of gluten-free flours, ranging from all-purpose flours to those dedicated specifically to pizza. In all cases we followed the directions on the box. The results were less than satisfactory. The majority of the products we tasted had a vegetal aftertaste and lacked the rise we were looking for. We toyed around with making our own flours, but decided it was too cumbersome and labor-intensive—and in conflict with our mission to simplify, not complicate your life. In the name of pizza equality for all, we pressed forward.

After months of testing various combinations and permutations of ingredients, we settled on a recipe that incorporated baking powder for leavening, Xanthan gum to bind, extra yeast to help the rise and an egg yolk to add *tenderness* to the “crumb”. The result yielded the best-tasting, most pleasingly textured gluten-free dough we have tasted.

Once we cracked the ingredient code, our next challenge was to adapt the dough to the grill. Because of the nature of gluten-free dough—which is extremely delicate and sticky before it is cooked—it is difficult to put the uncooked dough directly on the cooking grates as we do with our basic dough. (note: we discovered some direct-to-grill dough recipes on the web, but they were all either impractical or inedible). After more trial and error, we created a two-step process: the first step involves rolling out the dough on a sheet pan, letting it rise and par-baking it in an oven for 10 minutes. The second step involves transferring the dough to the grill where it is then handled and grilled in a similar manner to our traditional grilled crust. Sure this technique requires an extra step, but we assume that if you are fed up with having to sacrifice one of life's great pleasures, you will be willing go the extra distance in order to create a guilt-free crust you can trust.

With the dough issue solved, we circled back to the toppings and analyzed every sauce, topping, and cheese in the book in order to identify any ingredient that could possibly contain glutes. (note: the more processed a food is—especially where starch modifiers and emulsifiers are used—the more likely it is to contain glutes). Where no gluten-free option was available, we modified our original recipe. Where the potential for hidden glutes exists, we have italicized the ingredient to indicate that you should scrutinize it before using, and if necessary search out another brand. As a result of our revisions, any pizza in this edition, when made with our gluten-free crust, is gluten-free. Now you can have your grilled pizza *and* eat it too!

Gluten-free Pizza Dough

(Yield: one 12" pizza crust)

- ¾ cup lukewarm water (70 to 95 degrees) + extra as needed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil + extra for oiling the pan
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 package active dry yeast (2¼ teaspoons)
- 1½ cups C4C Gluten-free Flour Mix or King Arthur Gluten-free Multi-Purpose Flour + extra as needed
- 1 teaspoon Xanthan Gum
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons grits or polenta

In a medium bowl add water, oil, and sugar. Sprinkle the yeast on top and let sit until foamy—about 5 minutes.

In a large bowl, add flour, Xanthan Gum, Baking Powder, and salt. Mix.

Add egg yolk to liquid/yeast mixture and beat until combined. Add the wet mix to the dry mixture and blend with a fork until well incorporated and the dough has the feel of slightly sticky conventional dough. Do not overwork. If the dough is too dry, add additional water, one tablespoon at a time. If it is very sticky, add additional flour, one tablespoon at a time.

Generously oil a rimless cookie sheet (or turn a rimmed cookie sheet upside down and use the bottom), and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon polenta. Use your hands and/or a well-oiled rolling pin to create a 1/8 - ¼-inch-thick crust in the center of the pan (1/8-inch is ideal). Sprinkle remaining polenta over top of dough. Cover dough with plastic wrap, and place in a warm area. After 30 minutes you should see a significant rise in the dough. Let the dough rise for another 30 minutes (an hour in total) or until almost doubled in thickness.

Preheat oven at 350°F. Remove the plastic and par bake the dough for 10 minutes. Dough should be cooked through, but not browned. Par baked dough can be grilled immediately, refrigerated for up to 2 days in a re-sealable plastic bag, or frozen** for later use. Note: you may find it helpful to cut the cooled pizza crust in half for storage.

** We find it efficient to par-bake multiple crusts at once, and freeze them individually so that they are at the ready anytime the craving for grilled pizza hits.