

Rice Flour Pizza Crust

Making pizza dough utilizes the same techniques as regular bread dough; the difference is simply in the forming and baking. Although it is hard to reproduce a pizzeria-style pizza without an extremely hot brick oven, a homemade pizza is still very good, as well as lots of fun to make. The crusts are flavorful and chewy. For best results, use metal pizza pans with Swiss cheese size holes known in professional circles as "power pans."

This recipe is adapted from a now-famous recipe developed by Bette Hagman in her landmark book *The Gluten-Free Gourmet* (Henry Holt, 1990). It is so good I like to share it with everyone I meet. Even if you are not wheat intolerant, this is a tasty, thick crust. Xanthan gum is a powder milled from the microorganism *Xanthomonas campestris*, an important addition to wheat-free yeast breads to help them stick together.

Makes two 12-inch pizza crusts

2 cups brown rice flour
2 cups tapioca flour
3/4 cup nonfat dry milk powder
4 teaspoons xanthan gum
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons (2 packages) active dry yeast
1 cup warm water (105° to 115°)
1 tablespoon honey
1/2 cup hot water
3 tablespoons olive oil
4 large egg whites, room temperature

1. In a small bowl, sprinkle the yeast over the warm water with a the tablespoon of honey. Stir to dissolve and let stand at room temperature until foamy, about 10 minutes. Preheat the oven to 400° or its highest setting, with a baking stone on the center rack, if desired.
2. In the bowl of a heavy-duty electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the flours, dry milk, xanthan gum, and salt. Add the hot water and olive oil. Beat for 1 minute. Pour the yeast mixture into flour and beat 2 minutes. Add the egg whites and beat

on high speed 3 minutes. You will have a thick batter-like dough that will hold its own shape. Adjust the texture by adding a few more tablespoons of rice flour, if necessary. Remove from the bowl with a large spatula.

3. Grease two 12-inch pizza pans with olive oil. Scrape half of the dough onto each pan. With your hand in a plastic bag, use your fingers to press and flatten from the center out into the edges, taking care not to tear the dough, until it is evenly distributed, making the dough slightly higher at the edges to hold in the filling. Spread on your tomato sauce and toppings.

Tips for Great Pizza:

- Limit yourself to 3 to 5 topping ingredients. Think of pizza as a starch plus a topping, like a sandwich.
- Include either a meat or a vegetable, an herb, and a cheese to balance the flavors.
- Always coat the dough with a layer of sauce or olive oil before assembling.
- Leave a full 1-inch margin around the edges to form a crust.
- Distribute the topping ingredients evenly, so that every bite will contain all flavors.

4. Bake until the dough is crisp, the topping is hot, and the cheese is melted, 20 to 25 minutes. Always check the bottom of the crust with a large spatula during the baking time to assure a browned, crisp crust. The crust will soften as it sits after baking. Transfer the pizza to a cutting board and cut into wedges with a pizza wheel or a serrated bread knife.

Rice Flour Pizza Crust with Herbs

Add 2 to 3 tablespoons of mixed chopped fresh herbs of choice, such as basil, rosemary, oregano, parsley, or marjoram to the dough during mixing.

Rice Flour Pizza Crust with Garlic

Add 2 cloves sautéed chopped or pureed roasted garlic to the dough during mixing.