

**SIMPLY GLUTEN FREE**

# Pizza breadsticks keep even picky kids happy



*Editor's note: Today we introduce a new feature for Food, Simply Gluten Free by Carol Kicinski. She has 20 years of gluten-free experience and in 2007 launched her simplygluten-free.com website. She is also a cookbook author and the founder and editor-in-chief of Simply Gluten-Free Magazine.*

By CAROL KICINSKI

Getting kids to eat can sometimes be a hassle, especially when they are on a gluten-free diet. But here is what I know — kids love to eat anything that can be dunked into something else and they will almost always eat pizza.

This is a super easy, gluten-free recipe for pizza breadsticks. They can be used as an appetizer or main dish and can even be packed into a lunch box if the kiddos have a way to reheat them briefly in a microwave.

I made these using my family's favorite pizza combo — pepperoni and cheese — but you could customize this recipe in a number of ways.

For dairy-free just add shredded dairy-free cheese or you can omit it altogether.

You could also leave out pepperoni and substitute with chopped sun dried tomatoes and some basil for a margherita version.

For this recipe I started with a box of gluten-free breadstick mix and simply added in some dried Italian seasoning, shredded mozzarella cheese and chopped pepperoni. For an extra cheesy finish, I brushed them with olive oil and shredded parmesan before baking.

The dipping sauce takes about a minute and a half to make. I used dried garlic and herbs in the sauce because I think they give it an all-day simmered flavor without having to actually simmer all day.

Of course, I don't recommend serving pizza in any form every night for dinner, but the occasional pizza night is fun and it gets those kids (even the picky ones) running to the table.



SIMPLY GLUTEN FREE/CAROL KICINSKI

**A gluten-free breadstick** can be seasoned with dried Italian herbs, mozzarella and pepperoni for a kid-friendly snack or main dish.

## Gluten-Free Soft Bread

- 1 1/4 cups warm (110 degrees) milk**
- 4 1/2 teaspoons dry active yeast**
- 3 tablespoons sugar, divided use**
- 1 1/2 cups superfine or Asian white rice flour**
- 1 cup tapioca starch**
- 1/2 cup glutinous (sweet rice) flour plus more for preparing the pan**
- 1 tablespoon psyllium husks powder**
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- 3 large eggs**
- 1/4 cup grapeseed or vegetable oil plus more for preparing the pan**



Whisk together the milk, yeast and 1 tablespoon sugar. Let sit until the yeast has proofed (almost double in size with a head of foam about 1-inch thick), 5 to 10 minutes.

Grease a 9 1/4-inch by 5 1/4-inch by 2 3/4-inch loaf pan with oil. Sprinkle in some sweet rice flour, coat the pan, and tap out the excess.

Whisk the rice flour, tapioca starch, sweet rice flour, psyllium husks powder, salt, and remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar. Add the proofed yeast mixture, eggs, and oil, and whisk until smooth and lump free. Pour into the prepared pan, cover with a clean tea towel and let rise in a warm, draft-free environment for 20 or 25 minutes or until the batter comes almost to the top of the pan. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees while the bread is rising.

Bake the bread for 30 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool in the pan then remove to a wire rack to finish cooling.

Makes 1 loaf

## Tips for making gluten-free bread

I was recently on a quest for an incredibly easy, soft, gluten-free white (or sandwich) bread recipe that literally anyone could make.

Prior to creating this recipe I always thought a good stand mixer was essential to baking homemade gluten-free bread. Interestingly, this recipe worked best with just a bowl and a whisk.

A few additional tips for great-tasting bread:

■ Asian flours are milled finer, giving superior results when you are looking for a soft, even texture and they are about a third of the price of the flours and starches you get at the health-food store.

■ Look for psyllium husks in the supplement department of your health-food store. It is typically sold where they sell colon cleansers.

■ Psyllium husks are great for gluten-free baking, they are cheaper and easier to come by than xanthan gum and don't cause the tummy upsets that gums can for some people. But measure your psyllium husks carefully.

■ Be sure to grease AND flour your loaf pan; if you just grease it your bread may get a little soggy at the bottom.

■ Heat your milk or water to warm (about 110 degrees) not hot. If you stick your finger in it, the liquid should feel warm and you can keep your finger in there for several seconds comfortably. You can replace the milk in this recipe with soy or just use water.

■ Let your yeast proof until it is has a nice head of foam (like a glass of beer) about 1-inch thick. If you store your yeast in the fridge, it may take about 10 minutes.

■ The batter for this bread is thinner than you might expect — it is similar to a thick pancake batter. Don't let your batter rise too much; it should come just under the top of your pan for the best results.

## Gluten-Free Pizza Breadsticks

### For the breadsticks:

- 1 (7.5-ounce) box gluten-free breadstick mix**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (1 teaspoon for brushing)**
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese (or dairy-free)**
- 3 ounces pepperoni, diced into 1/4-inch pieces**
- 1 teaspoon dry Italian seasoning**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1/4 cup water**
- 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese (or dairy-free)**

### For the sauce:

- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste**
- 6 ounces water**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 2 teaspoons dry Italian seasoning**
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder**
- 1 teaspoon kosher or fine sea salt**
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper**
- Crushed red pepper flakes, to taste**
- Sugar, honey or sweetener, to taste**

Dump contents of the bowl onto a clean work surface and knead until dough comes together and is smooth. Divide dough into 12 equal pieces and roll into logs about 4 1/2 inches long. If the pepperoni sticks out too much, just push them back into dough.

Place the breadsticks on prepared baking sheet, brush with olive oil and sprinkle Parmesan on top.

Bake for 25 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm with the sauce for dipping.

For the sauce:

Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan. Whisk to combine and heat until warm. Let sit while breadsticks are baking. Serve the sauce warm and on the side for dipping. Makes 12.

# Writer's road to health results in gluten-free cookbook

By SUSAN SELASKY  
DETROIT FREE PRESS

Lisa Howard first considered going gluten-free about five years ago.

The 37-year-old food writer and recipe developer from Berkley, Mich., began dabbling with gluten-free baking because of the culinary challenges it presented.

"Gluten-free baking was a whole new ... interesting field of sort ... to get involved in and experiment with," she said.

At the same time, Howard says, she began to experience gastro problems and stomach pain. Opting for a holistic approach, she put herself on an elimination diet to see whether food was the culprit. After forgoing and then reintroducing a series of common food allergens, Howard discovered gluten was affecting her health.

"It was a weird coincidence that after I started getting interested [in gluten-free] as a casual observer, it then became kind of a necessity," she says.

Back then there were far fewer gluten-free products as there are now and the ones Howard said she could find didn't meet her standards.

"When I started getting into commercially made GF (gluten-free baked goods) products I was horrified with what was on store shelves," she said. "They don't have much flavor for one and, at the same time, you just eat a bunch of starches."

So Howard set out to develop her own recipes using a whole foods approach. The result is a new cookbook.

"Healthier Gluten-Free: All-Natural Whole-Grain Recipes Made with Healthy Ingredients and Zero Fillers" (Fair Winds Press, \$24.99) is filled with recipes for gluten-free versions of favorites like baked goods and pizza. Nearly all recipes come with a recipe note about a specific ingredient or a tip or a technique.

We caught up with Howard (who also shares recipes and more at [theculturedcook.com](http://theculturedcook.com)) recently to talk about her book. Here are highlights of what she had to say:

**Q:** Baked goods (breads, doughs, cakes, cookies) typically have flour. How easy was it to come up with those recipes sans gluten?

**A:** The hardest thing is baking, because cooking is

pretty laissez-faire and is more eyeballing it. Baking depends more on chemical reaction — it's more of a science. So you cross out the French crazy stuff, the baguettes, the croissants. Rather than beat my head against the wall, I said I am going to focus on all the stuff that works great: muffins, flat bread, pancakes, crepes, cookies and waffles. The only thing I don't have in my book is sandwich bread. I know people do want that, but at the same time I am hoping to encourage everyone, not just gluten-free people, to think beyond that single slice of bread.

**Q:** Is it expensive to eat gluten-free or use the gluten-free flours?

**A:** It's easier, I think, to do it yourself. You can make your own nut flours. You can buy sliced almonds in bulk and grind them yourself. It's a lot fresher, more nutritious, it works better, tastes better, is better for you, and it's half the price.

**Q:** Is there anything you really miss since you gave up gluten?

**A:** One thing I do miss is really good beer, a German Hefeweizen. I lived in Germany and I love German wheat beer.

## Almond Sponge Cake with Chocolate Ganache Frosting

### For the cake

- 2 yolks**
- 5 eggs**
- 1/2 cup powdered sucanat (see note)**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla**
- 1 cup almond flour**
- 1/3 cup sorghum flour**

- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled**

- For the frosting**
- 3.5 ounces dark chocolate (75 percent to 85 percent cacao)**
- 1/2 cup heavy cream, chilled**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Thoroughly grease an 8-by-8-inch glass pan. To make the cake: Place yolks, eggs, sucanat and vanilla in a large mixing bowl. Whip on high for 4 full minutes with a hand mixer or a standing mixer. Quickly whip in the flours, baking powder and melted butter. Pour batter into the pan and bake for 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean and warm. Let cake cool before frosting.

To make the frosting: Place a large mixing bowl and the beaters in the freezer. Break up the chocolate and place in a small saucepan over the lowest heat setting. Melt slowly, stirring often. Remove from heat when the chocolate still has a few bumps and continue stirring to finish melting the chocolate. Set aside.

Pour cream into the chilled bowl and whip with the chilled beaters until you have fluffy but still smooth cream. Whip in the melted chocolate.

Frost the cooled cake and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to set the frosting. Leftover cake can be refrigerated for up to 4 days.

Cook's note: Make powdered sucanat by running granular sucanat through a coffee/spice grinder until powdery. When you refrigerate the cake for more than a few hours, the ganache frosting will harden, so it's best to let any leftover slices sit out at room temperature for an hour to soften before serving.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Total time: 1 hour (plus cooling time)

From "Healthier Gluten-Free: All-Natural Whole-Grain Recipes Made with Healthy Ingredients and Zero Fillers" by Lisa Howard (Fair Winds Press, \$24.99).