

Pizza from page B1

A.D., referring perhaps to the manner in which pizzas are plucked from the oven.

With such a celebrity endorsement, pizza became immensely popular and regional variations developed all over Italy.

In Sicily, pizza crusts were thick and rectangle-shaped, while "white pizzas" served with mozzarella and ricotta cheeses, garlic and olive oil were popular in other regions.

Influenced by travel, the pizza craze soon spread to the United States, and Americans have had a fascination with it ever since. Different regions developed a penchant for specific versions; New Yorkers craved thin slices, while Chicago pizza lovers creat-

ed the famous deep-dish pizza with two crusts and up to 1-1/2 pounds of mozzarella cheese.

In the early 1980s, pizzas became less like a bread and more like a canvas on which anyone could create a meal to dazzle the palate. With the advent of "gourmet" pizzas made famous by chefs such as Wolfgang Puck, culinary experts began topping their pizzas with seafood, salad, and even fruit.

In Italy, pizza is usually baked in a wood-burning, brick oven. Pizza can be a great summer food when you take advantage of local vine-ripened tomatoes, fresh basil, and the use of your outdoor grill.

You can either cover the grill

with a double layer of heavy duty aluminum foil, or purchase a ceramic or terra cotta baking stone sold in department or kitchen specialty stores, which closely resembles the effect achieved with baking pizza in a brick oven.

Grilled pizza can either be made on a kettle-type charcoal grill with a lid or on a gas grill. If using charcoal, set the fire as you would for grilling meat or fish. When the coals turn gray and the heat is constant, you can begin grilling the pizza. Be sure the coals are spread out evenly.

Gas grills should be initially set on the highest setting for 15 minutes. After that, lower the heat to low. If using a baking

stone, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Be sure to place the baking stone or aluminum foil on the cold grill before starting the fire.

Making your own pizza crust isn't difficult, you can even use your bread machine. Explore other options - pita bread, English muffins, and Hoboll.

"Cooking pizza at home is easier than ever right now," said nationally syndicated TV chef and cookbook author Art Ginsburg, also known as "Mr. Food." "People are looking for quick and easy dinner solutions that taste good - and pizza is just that."

Here are some tips from the American Dairy Association.

■ Experiment with new cheeses - try using Monterey Jack, Muenster or blue cheese.

■ Create original pizzas that draw from ethnic or regional flavors by using easy-to-find, indigenous ingredients:

■ Californian - Brush pizza crust with garlic- and olive oil, topped with a tossed Caesar or mesclun salad and shaved Parmesan and Romano cheeses.

■ Cajun - Start with spicy shrimp or andouille sausage, add potatoes and onions and top with Monterey Jack and mozzarella cheese.

■ Greek - Top a grilled pita crust with creamy feta cheese, kalamata olives, tomatoes,

cucumbers and red onion.

■ For a crisp crust, bake pizzas at high temperature (400°F to 500°F) for 10-15 minutes or until the cheese begins to turn golden brown.

■ When adding herbs such as oregano or rosemary to pizza, first gently rub the herbs to release the flavor oils.

For a free copy of pizza recipes from the American Dairy Association, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-sized envelope to: "Pizza Go Home!" c/o the American Dairy Association, P.O. Box 760, Rosemont, IL 60018-7760, or visit the ADA cheese web site at www.ilovecheese.com

Wine from page B1

more oak influences show in the nose with a distinct toasty element you can't miss, the fruit still shines. Everything is right about this wine. Described in one word, balanced.

The Carneros fruit in the 1996 Morgan Pinot Noir \$22 offers a dominance of bright cherry aromas. Some early, hearty smelling mushroom-like notes stem from the Monterey fruit.

The sample we tried was a bit closed, but judging from the consistency of past vintages, giving this wine a few more months aging in the bottle, will make your taste buds happy, happy.

Zinfandel

It's often said that American oak is best suited to zinfandel. There are winemakers who don't buy that. Morgan's winemaker Dean De Korth is one of them.

He believes that French oak integrates better with zinfandel. He also considers zinfandel a winemaker's wine where the style is shaped in the cel-

lar. Whatever the situation the 1996 Morgan Zinfandel from Dry Creek Valley \$16 is a winner at a bargain price. It's shameful that this so distinctly American wine is carrying price tags of \$25 and more!

We salute Morgan for making a vanilla-accented (from French oak) zinfandel rather than a spicy American oak style. It's a refreshingly fruity, delicious departure at a very honest price. If you like zinfandel, don't pass up this one.

For red wine lovers, a very limited amount of 1996 Morgan Syrah, Monterey, \$23.50 was shipped to this market. Vintage 1996 is considered one of the finest for Monterey region reds. This Syrah is layered with every red and black fruit you can name and is accented by peppery spice, but chocolate smooth finish.

Look for Focus on Wine on the first and third Sunday of the month in Taste. To leave a voice mail message for the Healds, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1864.

See related story on Taste front.

GRILLED GARDEN PIZZAS

Crust:
3/4 cup warm water (105-115 degrees)
one 1/4-ounce package (about 2 1/4 teaspoons) quick rising yeast
one tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons sugar
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup Quaker oats (quick or old-fashioned, uncooked)
1/4 teaspoon salt
Topping:
2 cups (8 ounces) shredded reduced-fat Italian cheese

blend, divided
1/2 cup thinly sliced bell peppers
1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil or 4 teaspoons dried basil leaves
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 plum tomatoes, thinly sliced (about 2 cups)
In a small bowl, combine water, yeast, oil and sugar; let stand 10 minutes or until foamy.
In a large bowl, combine flour, oats and salt. Add yeast mixture and blend on low speed of electric stand mixer until moistened. Beat 2 minutes at medium speed (do

not use a hand-held mixer). Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface. Knead one minute. Shape dough into ball, place in greased bowl, turning once. Cover, let rise in warm place 20 minutes or until nearly doubled in size.
Punch dough down; divide into four portions. Press each portion of dough into 7-inch circle. Grill over medium-hot coals 2 to 4 minutes or until bottom is golden brown. Remove from grill. On browned side of each pizza, sprinkle 1/2 cup cheese. Top pizzas with bell pepper, onion, basil, garlic, and tomatoes, dividing evenly. Return to grill. Cover, grill 4 to 6 minutes or until bottoms of crusts are golden

brown and cheese begins to melt. Sprinkle with remaining 2/3 cup cheese. Remove from grill once cheese has melted.

Baking directions:

Heat oven to 425 degrees F. Spray two cookie sheets with cooking spray. Pat each portion of dough into 7-inch circle onto prepared cookie sheet (2 pizzas per sheet). Layer each pizza with 1/2 cup cheese, peppers, onion, garlic and tomatoes. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Sprinkle with remaining 2/3 cup cheese and continue baking 3 to 4 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Recipe compliments of Quaker Oats.

Try these summer dishes on your picnic

Recipes from "The Old Farmer's Almanac: Summer's Best Recipes for 1998"

BARLEY BEAN AND HAM SALAD
3 cups chicken stock or water
1 cup pearl barley
1/4 teaspoon salt

1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and well rinsed
1 cup chopped ham
1 small, green pepper, diced
1 small red onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley or cilantro
Mustard Vinaigrette
1/4 cup olive oil
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons brown sugar
1 clove garlic, minced
Salt and pepper, to taste
Bring the stock to a boil in a medium sized saucepan. Stir in the barley and

salt. Return to a boil, cover, lower the heat and simmer for 30 to 35 minutes.
When done, the barley will be chewy, but tender, and the liquid will be absorbed. Remove the pan from the heat and let sit, covered, for 10 minutes.
Ten spread the barley on a plate to cool. When cool, transfer it to a bowl and mix in the beans, ham, green pepper, onion and parsley.
To make the vinaigrette: Whisk the oil, vinegar, mustard, brown sugar and garlic in a small bowl. Pour the salad dressing over the salad and

mix well.
Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate until serving.

Serves 6.

CHINESE CHICKEN SALAD

2 cups thinly sliced cooked chicken breast
3/4 cup well-drained Mandarin orange segments
3/4 cup roasted small cashews
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
2 scallions, finely chopped
1 red bell pepper, diced
3/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons sesame oil
8 slices raisin pumpernickel, whole wheat or multi-grain bread
1 cup alfalfa sprouts
In medium-size bowl, toss together the chicken, oranges, cashews, cilantro, scallions and pepper. Add mayonnaise, lemon juice and sesame oil. Stir until well combined. Spread salad mixture on half of the bread slices and top with sprouts and remaining bread. Cut into halves. Makes 4 sandwiches

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