

Sticky Fingers Cooking®

Creative Calzones

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 18 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

knead: to work dough by pushing, pulling, and folding it by hand or with a stand mixer.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

mix: to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

seal: to close tightly, keeping filling inside.

Equipment

- Oven or stove
- Baking sheet or nonstick skillet
- Large mixing bowls (2)
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Clean, damp dish towel
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife

- Grater
- Heat-resistant spatula

Ingredients

Creative Calzones

- Calzone dough:
- 4 C all-purpose flour + more if needed ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour)****
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 C plain Greek or natural yogurt ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt)****
- olive oil or cooking spray for brushing on dough and cooking
- Savory fillings (choose 3-5):
- 1/2 lb mozzarella cheese, one slice per kid or have the kids grate it ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free cheese shreds, like Daiya brand)****
- 1/2 C ricotta cheese ****(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY)****
- scrambled eggs, for a breakfast filling ****(Omit for EGG ALLERGY or sub silken tofu, except for soy allergy)****
- handful fresh spinach
- bell pepper, diced ****(Omit for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY)****
- zucchini, diced
- handful mushrooms, diced
- handful frozen corn or peas
- tomatoes, diced ****(Omit for NIGHTSHADE/TOMATO ALLERGY)****
- cream cheese ****(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub dairy-free/nut-free cream cheese)****
- dried herbs (you choose)
- salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- olive oil
- garlic clove, minced
- canned tomato sauce ****(Omit for NIGHTSHADE/TOMATO ALLERGY)****

Sweet fillings (choose 1-3):

apple

fruit jam

cream cheese ****(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub dairy-free/nut-free cream cheese)****

ricotta cheese ****(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY)****

chocolate chips ****(for CHOCOLATE ALLERGY sub carob chips; for DAIRY/NUT/SOY ALLERGY sub Enjoy Life brand chocolate chips)****

sugar

ground cinnamon

Food Allergen Substitutions

Creative Calzones

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free flour.

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt.

For optional toppings:

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free cheese shreds, like Daiya brand, for mozzarella. Omit ricotta cheese. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free cream cheese.

Egg: Omit egg or substitute silken tofu (if there is no soy allergy).

Nightshade: Omit bell pepper. Omit tomatoes and canned tomato sauce.

Chocolate: Substitute carob chips for chocolate chips.

Dairy/Nut/Soy: Use Enjoy Life brand chocolate chips.

Instructions

Creative Calzones

intro

Kids' creativity is the focus of this recipe. Make dough with your kids, then have them prepare the filling lined up on the table. Kids get to make their own Italian creations!

mix + knead

To make the calzone dough, add **4 cups flour**, **1 teaspoon baking powder**, and **1 teaspoon salt** to a large mixing bowl and mix. Stir in **2 cups of yogurt** until the dough is too stiff to stir with the spoon.

Then, knead it in the bowl until it holds together well, adding more flour if necessary. Turn the dough out on a floured surface and cut into pieces for each child. Have kids continue kneading their dough for about 5

minutes until the dough feels smooth and elastic.

roll + shape + rest

Kids can then roll their dough into a ball and put the dough balls into an oiled bowl. Cover with a clean, damp dish towel and set aside to rest.

counting break

Let's count to 10 in Italian! 1 uno (OO-noh), 2 due (DOO-eh), 3 tre (treh), 4 quattro (KWAHT-troh), 5 cinque (CHEEN-kweh), 6 sei (SEH-ee), 7 sette (SET-teh), 8 otto (OHT-toh), 9 nove (NOH-veh), 10 dieci (dee-EH-chee).

chop + grate

Time to make the fillings! Have kids fill bowls with the fillings they like for their savory or sweet calzone. They can chop and grate the fruit and vegetables as they wish. Kids can make one large calzone or a small savory calzone and a small sweet calzone.

oil + press + flatten

Coat each dough ball in oil. Give each kid a small oiled ball of dough and have them press the balls flat into round discs. Take 1 disc of flattened dough and make sure it is less than 1/4-inch thick. The thinner the dough the better! (Kids may need to wash their oily hands.)

fill + fold + seal

Have kids spoon on fillings of their choice, then fold the dough over into half-moon shapes and carefully pinch the sides together to seal in the fillings.

cook + cool

Either preheat your oven to 400 F and place the filled and folded calzones on a greased baking sheet and bake for 12 to 18 minutes, or cook the calzones over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes on each side in a nonstick skillet on your stove top. They will puff up in places or all over, and there may be some blackish-brown spots on the bottom, which is totally okay! Let the calzones cool a bit before eating. "Mangia bene" (MAHN-jah Behn-neh) or "Eat well" in Italian!

Featured Ingredient: Flour!

Hi! I'm Flour!

"Happy Baking, Friends! I'm Flour, and I'm a VIP (Very Important Powder)! I'm really quite useful (and humble). You can use me to make breads, cakes, cookies, crackers, crumpets, doughnuts, muffins, pancakes, pasta, waffles, and more. (Which is your favorite?) I can coat vegetables and meats before frying them in oil, and you can combine me with a fat to make a roux to thicken sauces and gravies. You can even make play dough and glue with me. Can you see now why I'm a VIP?"

History

Around 8,000 to 15,000 years ago, people discovered that they could crush wheat seeds between simple grindstones to make flour.

When you grind cereal grains, beans, seeds, or roots (like cassava), they become a powder, resulting in flour. Some of the grains besides wheat that can be ground into flour are rye, buckwheat, barley, corn, oat, and rice. Other foods used to make flour are potatoes, acorns, mesquite, cassava, soybeans, garbanzo beans (or chickpeas), amaranth, and even bananas!

Flour is the primary component of bread, and bread is a staple in many countries. Therefore, sufficient amounts of flour are critical, which has caused major economic and political issues at various times throughout history.

Anatomy & Etymology

Before grains are ground into flour, they are whole pieces taken from a plant.

Each kernel of wheat consists of three parts: the coarse outer bran layer (which contains most of the fiber), the germ, and the endosperm. The endosperm stores the grain's starch, a carbohydrate that the body uses to create energy. Other foods that contain starch are potatoes, pasta, and rice.

Whole-wheat flour is the result of grinding or milling the whole grain. It contains all three parts of the kernel—bran, endosperm, and germ.

White flour has been refined or polished and bleached to remove the bran. As a result, white flour has less fiber than whole-wheat flour and fewer nutrients, too.

The word "flour" is originally a variant of the word "flower." Both derive from the Old French "fleur" or "flour," literally "blossom," and figuratively "the finest" (of the milled grain).

How Flour is made

Flour is made in nearly every country in the world.

First, farmers plant wheat seeds, and plants begin to grow. Then, when they are ready to harvest, farmers collect them with giant machines called combines.

Combines cut, separate, and clean the wheat at the same time. The grain must be completely dry before storing, so farmers don't harvest it when it's rainy.

Then, they transfer the flour to a mill (a building where grains are ground into flour), where a miller will oversee the grinding of the wheat grain into flour.

One whole wheat grain makes over 20,000 particles of flour!

Nutrition

Flour contains protein and is a significant source of carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates are a direct source of energy for the body. Our bodies first have to make some changes to the carbohydrates, but then they are quickly converted to energy by our cells.

Fiber helps to keep our intestines happy, feeding the good bacteria in our gut. Whole-wheat, unbleached flour is an excellent source of fiber.

Whole wheat contains essential nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, protein, and fiber.

Organic, unbleached flour is the healthiest.

Wheat-free and gluten-free flours are vital to people who have celiac disease, wheat allergies, or gluten intolerance (or non-celiac gluten sensitivity). Varieties of gluten-free flours include those made from: almonds, amaranth, buckwheat, corn, garbanzo beans (or chickpeas), millet, quinoa, rice, sorghum, soybeans, and teff.