

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Home Cooking in the Time of Corona

Angela Cohan · Wednesday, November 4th, 2020

I keep hearing the phrase “The New Normal” in reference to the new reality of our post-COVID world. There is nothing normal about what the world is collectively experiencing. I, like many others, have gone through the different stages of grief over the past several months – shock, disbelief, anger, bargaining and finally, acceptance.

As I read and watched the news in January and February, I was optimistic that the virus would not reach the United States. Needless to say, I was proven wrong. As the imminent shutdown of cities occurred and people panicked to stock up on toilet paper and food staples, my family and I found ourselves in the precarious position of preparing for the worst. My son, who was out of town at the time, offered to buy and bring home water and other necessary food items.

Venturing out to the supermarket became a hassle, so I found myself shopping online, but I cooked and baked almost every day. Unfortunately, many of the restaurants we had frequented over the years did not survive the pandemic. The ones that were able to adapt to delivery or had the space for outdoor dining had better luck.

I had to plan three meals plus snacks for four people every day. One of the first meals I created was vegetarian sushi with carrots, avocado, cucumbers, and cauliflower rice, when I found Nori (seaweed) in the pantry. Most of the new dishes I created were vegetarian.



Vegetarian Sushi

Another recipe that came in handy was pizza dough. The recipe also works for making focaccia. Throughout the year, I posted the new recipes on my website: angelacohan.com

Recipe for Homemade Pizza Dough

Ingredients:

2 cups bread flour

1 package dry yeast

1 cup warm water

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon sugar (optional)

Directions:

1 – Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.



Cheese-less Vegetable Pizza

2 – In a measuring cup or glass bowl, pour the warm water and add the yeast. You can add the sugar and salt at this point. Set aside.

3 – In a large bowl, add the flour (I used Bob’s Red Mill Bread flour, but you can use all-purpose flour). Pour in the activated yeast mixture and form the dough into a ball using your hands or a spatula.

4 – Pour olive oil into the bowl. Flip the dough in the oil several times, then cover and let it rest in the bowl for 10 minutes.

5 – Work the dough onto a greased or lightly sprayed parchment-lined sheet pan and form your desired shape.

6 – Top with pizza sauce, cheese or your favorite toppings (I added roasted vegetables to this dough).

7 – Bake for 20 minutes if you prefer a soft dough, or longer for a crispier pizza.

I did not have the patience to make Sourdough bread, but I mostly created baked goods and sweets. Here are some of simpler dessert recipes I posted on my website:

Three-Ingredient Oatmeal Cookies

Ingredients:

2 bananas

1 cup rolled oats

½ cup chocolate chips

Directions:

1 – Stir together all the ingredients in a medium bowl. Let the mixture sit for 20 minutes.

2 – Using an ice cream scoop or a spoon drop the cookies on a lightly greased baking sheet. Use the back of the spoon to flatten each cookie.

3 – Bake in a 350 degree oven for 12 to 15 minutes.

4 – Serve warm.



Oatmeal Chocolate Cookies

Spinach Matcha Cupcakes

These sugar-free cupcakes are a great treat any time of the day. You can add a 1/4 cup raw sugar or brown sugar if you prefer a a sweet dessert.

Ingredients:

2 bananas

1 cup rolled oats

1 teaspoon Matcha powder

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 cup fresh spinach

1/2 cup non-dairy milk

Directions:

1 – Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place liners or muffin cups in a muffin tin.

2 – In a blender or food processor, blend all the ingredients until you reach a smooth consistency.

3 – Pour the mixture into the muffin cups (filling $\frac{3}{4}$ of each cup).

4 – Bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Cool and serve.

You can refrigerate the leftovers for up to 3 days.



Sugar-free Spinach Matcha Cupcakes

Banana Bread (Gluten-free and Dairy-free)

This recipe includes 1/2 cup of coconut cream, thus eliminating the need for added sugar. You can omit the walnuts if you have nut allergies.

2 bananas

2 eggs, room temperature

2 cups almond flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

½ cup coconut cream

3 Tablespoons coconut oil or 2 Tablespoons clarified butter (ghee)


¼ cup chopped walnuts

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ cup chocolate chips (optional)

¼ cup brown sugar or ¼ cup coconut brown sugar (optional)

Directions:

1 – In a large bowl whisk the dry ingredients (almond flour,  baking soda and walnuts). If using chocolate chips, whisk them in at this point.

2 – In another bowl add the wet ingredients (bananas, eggs, coconut cream and vanilla), and mix until all the ingredients are well-incorporated.

3 – Combine the two mixtures.

4 – Spray a loaf pan (or preferably a rectangular glass dish) with oil, then pour the batter into the dish.

5 – Bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 35 minutes.

Garnish with berries or nuts. Serve warm or cold.

I documented my weekly baking adventures on my Instagram page. I was surprised to find I had baked over thirty different desserts in the past year. Baking is a good distraction and helps me cope with stress. For more inspiration and ideas check my Instagram feed @angelacohan.

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