

Oysters Rockefeller Pizza – Comfort du Jour

Oysters Rockefeller has always been a favorite of mine, an appetizer dish that feels so classic and ritzy and special. So what about a crispy New York-style pizza crust with a creamy, garlicky base, briny oysters, smoky cooked bacon, earthy spinach and sharp salty cheeses—oh my goodness, yes—why wouldn't this be a thing?

This recipe brings all the fancy flavors of Oysters Rockefeller, on a fun and casual pizza. Serve with Caesar salad and champagne, of course.

INGREDIENTS

1 ball [N.Y. pizza dough](#) (check my blog for the recipe or use your favorite store-bought dough)

THE BÉCHAMEL BASE

1 Tbsp. salted butter
1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
3/4 cup whole milk
1 whole bulb roasted garlic
2 oz. gruyere cheese*

THE COOKED TOPPINGS

3 very thick slices uncured smoked bacon* (see notes)
1 small shallot, minced fine*
1 fat handful fresh baby spinach leaves
A pinch of ground cayenne pepper (optional)
2 Tbsp. dry white wine (or dry vermouth)

THE CHEESE TOPPINGS

1/2 cup grated gruyere cheese
1/4 cup grated or shaved Pecorino-Romano cheese
A few tablespoons of our favorite [parm-romano blend](#) (instructions available on my blog)

THE GARLIC CRUMB TOPPER

2 Tbsp. salted butter
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/3 cup panko bread crumbs
1 small handful fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

THE OYSTERS

1 dozen large Blue Point (or similar) oysters, shucked*

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*NOTES

Gruyere is a nutty, semi-hard cheese that is similar to swiss cheese. It is a typical ingredient in the topping for Oysters Rockefeller, and I used it twice for this pizza—in the béchamel and also grated on top of the pie. Substitute with swiss or mild white cheddar if you cannot get it.

We used uncured (nitrite-free) bacon, which was smoked with peach wood—wow. So, so good. You may not be able to find this exact kind of bacon (we got it from a local butcher counter), but substitute a good quality, thick-cut bacon with light smoky flavor and not too much sweetness. This bacon was also hand-cut by the butcher and therefore *very* thick slices. Once cubed, it measured a total of about 1 1/2 dry cups.

Please remember that shallots are not the same as scallions, but more similar to red or sweet onion. Scallions are long, skinny green onions and not be recommended for this recipe.

We really wanted fresh oysters in the shell, but for food safety reasons, no purveyor would sell them freshly shucked. We had two options—either shuck them ourselves at cooking time (this is not for novices, which we are) or buying them already shucked and packed, by the pint. We opted for the latter and they were fantastic.

INSTRUCTIONS

I have broken the instructions down into segments, beginning with the béchamel base and the cooked toppings. It's nice to have them done, out of the way and the kitchen cleaned up before the real cooking begins. If you'd like, you can even make the cooked toppings a couple of days ahead. Be sure to bring all ingredients to room temperature when you're ready to build the pizza.

BÉCHAMEL

A béchamel is one of the simplest and most adaptable things you can make in the kitchen—master this, and you'll find yourself whipping up all kinds of creations. I only needed a small amount for this Oysters Rockefeller pizza, and I ended up not using all of it. When cooled, the béchamel is somewhat thick and difficult to spread, so check the photos to see how I managed to get it evenly onto the dough.

1. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt 1 tablespoon butter. Add 1 tablespoon flour and allow it to cook until bubbly and fragrant.
2. Add milk all at once and whisk until smooth and thickened.
3. Squeeze in entire bulb of roasted garlic, taking care not to let the garlic paper fall into the pan.
4. Add gruyere cheese and whisk until smooth.
5. Let it cool, then transfer béchamel to a small zip-top bag, seal the bag and set aside until you're ready to make the pizza.

PREP THE COOKED TOPPINGS

1. Cut the thick slices of bacon into pieces approximately the size of sugar cubes.
2. Heat a cast-iron skillet over medium heat and cook the bacon cubes until they are crispy on the edges but still somewhat soft. Remember that they will cook further in the oven on the pizza. Remove the bacon

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with a slotted spoon to a paper towel-lined plate and set aside. Drain most of the grease from the skillet, keeping about 1 tablespoon to cook the shallots.

3. In the same skillet, cook the minced shallots over medium heat until they are soft and translucent. Season them with black pepper and then transfer them to a dish.
4. Add the chopped fresh spinach leaves to the same skillet and toss until most of the moisture is cooked out of it. The spinach will cook down to only a few tablespoons, and this is fine. Season with a smidgeon of cayenne if you wish. When the cooked spinach leaves begin to brown slightly, add a splash of dry wine or vermouth to the skillet and stir it around until evaporated. This will deglaze the skillet, returning all the little cooked-on bits of flavor to the dish. Transfer the spinach to the prep dish.
5. In a clean, small non-stick skillet, melt 2 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Add minced garlic and cook until lightly bubbly and fragrant, taking care to not let it burn. Add the panko crumbs to the butter and toss until the butter is absorbed. Add the chopped fresh parsley and stir to combine. Remove from heat and set aside until you're ready to build the pizza.

ASSEMBLE YOUR PIZZA MASTERPIECE

1. Preheat oven with stone or steel to 550° F for at least one hour. Remember that your pizza dough and other ingredients should be room temperature when you begin. I usually take everything out of the fridge when I set the timer on the oven.
2. Drain oysters on layers of paper towel (this is essential, whether you are shucking them yourself or using them from a pint jar).
3. Shape pizza dough into a 14-inch round and place it on a floured pizza peel. For shaping tips, check my blog for the [New York-style pizza dough](#) recipe. Spray or brush entire dough with olive oil and season with salt and freshly ground pepper.
4. Snip a corner off the zip-top bag and squeeze the bechamel in a zig-zag pattern to cover most of the dough. This doesn't have to be perfect, as it will melt and spread out when the pizza is transferred to the hot steel.
5. Sprinkle about 2 tablespoons of [parm-romano blend](#) cheese over the base, then scatter the cooked shallots evenly over the dough.
6. Arrange the drained oysters on the pizza, as close as 1 inch to the edge of the dough.
7. Evenly distribute the cooked spinach, and then scatter the crisped bacon cubes generously over the whole pie.
8. Top with grated gruyere, then grated or shaved Pecorino-Romano, and finally with another few shakes of parm-romano blend. Reserve the garlic panko crumbs for topping after the bake.
9. Slide the pizza into the oven for 6 to 7 minutes, until crust is puffed and golden and cheese toppings are bubbling.
10. Immediately scatter the garlic-panko-parsley crumbs all over the pizza, then slice and serve with champagne.