

Flamingos + Pizza + Babies. Now That's a Party



Someone was bound to get naked. Oh, also celebrating one of the few pictures where I'm not DROWNING in sweat. Dang Miami.

I survived my child's first birthday. I survived and I thrived. And let's be honest, the only reason it was a little bit stressed was me. I can't do 'simple'. I really can't. It's not in my DNA. Gd bless you if you can do simple. I admire and salute you but I just can't do it. I mean, you should have seen my Bat Mitzvah. Of course there was a theme (Hollywood). Of course there was a color scheme (black, silver and magenta) and of course, there was a DJ who dressed up like Michael Jackson and did an entire choreographed dance to a medley of Michael Jackson through the years. I mean, this was THE Bat Mitzvah to end all Bat Mitzvahs. So you see, the daughter raised by a mother who bought life-size cut-outs of movie stars and a hot pink sequenced top hats and feather boas as decoration for her daughter's Jewish coming-of-age party

wasn't going to grow up to tread lightly into her own child's birthday parties. Oh no. Not a chance.



Grain-free peppermint chocolate chip brownies. One of my most requested recipes.

There was a theme (retro-Palm-Springs-tacky-chic). There was kind of a color scheme (pink, yellow, green). I had made all the decorations, from the "Happy Birthday" sign to gluing about 50 individual sea horse cut out onto toothpicks for cupcake toppers. Part of the reason I made everything is because I can't in good conscience pay \$10 for a happy birthday sign when I can pay less to make my own. Same goes

with the cupcake toppers. Paying for things I can make hurts my insides a little so, of course I had to make that stuff. And of course, I made the food. Oh the food. The baking/cooking started at 8:45 on Saturday night and didn't stop until 1:55 on Sunday afternoon (the party started at 2PM). My husband and I went back and forth with what to serve folks for a late afternoon party – I wanted to go dairy so that I could do dairy cupcakes. We settled on homemade pizzas of varying fun flavors coupled with your usual hummus, veggies, fruit, etc. I also made mini strawberry cupcakes using the Sprinkles Cupcakes recipe, which I highly recommend. And since we have a few loved ones with a grain-free diet, I ended up making mini grain-free pizzas using roasted eggplant and zucchinis as the 'crust' as well as grain-free, vegan peppermint chocolate chip brownie bites (I used my own brownie bites recipe, found [here](#), and took out the oats and added a few drops of peppermint oil and vegan chocolate chips). All-in-all, I felt really proud of the party we created to celebrate the first year of life of our sweet girl. But honestly, I do love the planning and the arts and crafts and whatnot but that's not why I do it all. I go through all this big planning because I also want to celebrate the people who helped make her first year of life so frikkin' wonderful. Yes, I do love a good theme party and yes, I love cooking for people but more than anything, I love showing the people in our lives my ever-lasting appreciation through food and through taking care of them, even if it is for a few hours on a Sunday afternoon. My hope is that they walked away knowing that I love them for loving our girl. And if they happened to take a few dozen extra mini cupcakes away with them as well, that'd be OK too.

Below is a photo journal of the party as well as a few recipes I created for our dear friends. I hope you enjoy!

Grain-free Pizzas

Ingredients:

1 large roasted eggplant OR 1 large, thick zucchini cut into 1.5 inch thick rounds

Marinara Sauce

Cheese of choice

Fresh basil

Oil for baking sheet

How:

Cut eggplants into 1.5 inch rounds and dust with coarse kosher salt. Leave on for an hour to draw out moisture. Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees. Pat down with paper towel. Place on greased baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Bake at 400 degrees for roughly 30 minutes – keep eye out for over-browning. Once roasted, top with sauce and cheese – I used a standard marinara and topped some with sheep's milk feta and some with mozzarella. Top with chopped fresh basil.



Out of the oven



So. Much. Cooking.

I made 3 different kinds of pizzas using puffed pastry dough as the crust – I couldn't make the crust too. I wasn't that much of a glutton for punishment. Anyway, the toppings were as follows:

- 1) Tomato sauce with mozzarella, roasted eggplant, roasted garlic and fresh basil
- 2) Tomato sauce with mozzarella, sheep's milk feta and corn

3) BBQ Sauce, black peppercorn Monterrey Jack with caramelized purple onions



Roasted eggplant and garlic pizza.



My 1 year old



We still have 30 of these in our refrigerator



My Queen



Just a bunch of moms being awesome by the pool



They really have no clue what's going on



Ice-cold beverage, anyone?



After an hour in the pool, she was ready to party.



Aunt Misty was there too! I bet she didn't even know it.



Seriously, Uncle Mo, do my shades make me look too ironic?



Cupcake ecstasy



I'm not sure what it is, maybe it's the beard, but Siona is captivated by Zak.



One of those people I hope I can at least make half as happy as she makes me.