

What to REALLY Expect When You're Expecting (plus cauliflower crust pizza!).



"Listen up mama.
Gimme all your milk
and no one gets
hurt."

Spring has sprung down here in Miami and by that, I mean it's already 90 degrees some days and there are pregnant women every where. Every day I walk by my sweet friend and co-worker, Tara, who is 7 months pregnant and trying her darndest not to melt in this heat and I can't help but reminisce to where I was this time last year, which was 7 months pregnant and trying my darndest not to melt in this heat. Every time I see her I get transported back in time to being large and in charge with that baby in my belly and it just blows my mind that she's here now. She's here now and she's already old enough to have a couple teeth and to start crawling. Oy, blows. My. Mind. Due to this transport back in to time I also can't help but remember how stinkin' happy I was this time last year and how I didn't know what the h*ll was about to

happen to me. I also can't help but remember of all the unsolicited advice complete strangers would give me at all turns. I mean truly, the best conversations usually started out as, "Let me tell you about my wife's birth experience! It was crazy! She was in labor for 30 hours!!" Ummm, no buddy. I don't wanna hear that. Not even a little bit. Of all the things I was told that scared the sh*t outta me ('Don't get an epidural! You'll end up in a C-Section!' or "Don't feed your baby formula! She'll be obese and dumb the rest of her life!"), no one told me the things that I really really really wanted to know. Those things that, sure, might be hard to hear, but I would have appreciated knowing. Kind of the "What to REALLY Expect When You're Expecting". There were things I never expected--some of which no one could have predicted but some of which I think, on the whole, there could have been a little 'heads up' about. So for the sake of all those women out there experiencing their first pregnancy who could use that 'heads up', the following is my list of things I never would have expected. Warning: the following is not 'touchy feely', but it is honest so if you like honest, keep reading.

1. You will sweat like John Goodman on a hot summer's day. It's the hormones. They are coming out of you postpartum for about 2 weeks after you give birth. It's natural. There's no deodorant that can stop it, but it's natural.



2 weeks old. She's in there somewhere (and so are my sweaty pits)!

2. Maternity leave is not a vacation leave. It is maternity leave. This is the first 3 months of yours and your baby's life together, which means you are both getting to know each other while battling it out over who gets to sleep when and trying to figure out when you'll actually eat again. I don't know about you but that's not how I like to vacation.

3. Your boobs might not 'work'. I never expected to not be able to breast feed. It was in my plan. It never entered my mind that it wouldn't be how I fed my baby. But, I breast-fed for as long as I could, which was about 9 weeks. And guess what? My baby is a straight up formula baby and she's doing OK. I'll let you know if all that propaganda about formula being the devil is true in a year or so (spoiler alert: it's not).

4. I never expected memes on Facebook about breast-feeding

toddlers and baby cereal would make me wanna cry

5. I never expected those memes to be posted by other women

6. I never expected to get more emotional while watching movies/TV shows involving children. For example, my husband and I were watching a rerun of Lost where a supposed 6 week old baby is involved in a helicopter crash and miraculously suffers no injuries and the whole time I'm thinking, "wait, that baby hasn't been around its mother in days. Who's feeding it? How is he surviving!? How did he survive a helicopter crash!? What if that was my baby!?" And then I remember we're talking about an island that can travel through time so I got over it . . . kinda.

7. You will get blankets and socks (especially if you have a girl). People LOVE to give you blankets and socks as baby gifts. It's very sweet.

8. You might not 'fall in love' with your baby right away. It might take a couple days or even weeks. But when you do, oh boy, it is all-consuming.

9. Make sure you have a Smart Phone or something because you will need it to help stay awake in the wee hours while you're doing a feeding. I suggest creating a Pinterest account now if you haven't already. I love you Pinterest.

10. It's possible most or all of your family members will see your boobs at one point or another during those first couple weeks. My husband has 3 brothers, all of whom visited within the first 4 weeks of Siona's life and all of whom saw my boobs at some point during their visit. I even remember spending several hours one day with some of his family members only to discover, once they left, that I had spent the whole time with my tank top around my waste and nursing bra exposed a la Madonna on her Blond Ambition tour.

11. I never expected to want to punch a sweet British nanny in

the throat (this lady gets me). Listen, the Baby Whisperer seems really nice and she's clearly got a handle on this whole 'baby' thing. However, on one incredibly frustrating day during those first couple weeks of parenthood something dawned on me. The majority of these 'experts', whether via their books or blogs, had a lot of 'no' going on. There was a lot of 'Don't do this and for heavens sake, definitely don't do that!' It was stressful and honestly, not helpful for ME (again, everyone is different. It could totally have helped you and to that I say, "mazel tov sister!"). Ultimately, it's ALWAYS about finding what works for you and your family and if you start tracking your anxiety levels and realize that they go up every time you open one of these 'parenting' books or blogs it might be time to close up shop.

12. Edit your advice –When we first brought Siona home from the hospital I was texting and calling every mom I knew for advice. Then after a while I started editing. It was clear to me who was giving advice with an agenda and who was giving me advice based on what they know about me and my family. My unsolicited advice? Find a 2 or 3 women whose parenting style, outlook on life, and life style in general match yours and make those your mommy brain trust.

13. I never expected to be back in the kitchen as soon as I was. Thanks be to my best friend, the Ergo, I was cooking again several weeks after I gave birth and it felt great. It felt so good that when I went back to work, I took on the extra challenge of cooking for a co-worker. She wanted a specialized, Paleo menu and I wanted a challenge (and some extra cash to cover daycare). It was a match made in heaven.



5 weeks old! Our first Starbucks run. It was so freeing to get out (I had to document that glorious moment).

This list could go on and on but I'll stop now so I can leave space for the recipe! The recipe! The following recipe is a dish I made for the previously mentioned co-worker. It can be Paleo, gluten free, vegan, vegetarian or whatever you want it to be. I wanted some pizza dang it but didn't want the bread so I experimented with cauliflower instead and it really turned out nicely. Honestly, this would have been amazing for Passover so maybe next year. Anywho, see below for the recipe and thanks for reading.

Cauliflower Crust Pizza with Homemade Tomato Sauce, Ricotta, Roasted Eggplant and Arugula

For the Sauce – check out the sauce I made on a previous post. Just omit the cream cheese.

For the Crust (adapted from The Lucky Penny):

2 small heads of cauliflower, processed
1 TBSP sea salt
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 tsp of cayenne pepper
1/4 cup Daiya cheddar cheese (or mozzarella cheese)
1 egg

For the Eggplant:

1 medium eggplant, sliced in thin rounds
Coconut Oil
Seasalt
Garlic powder

Place thinly slice eggplant rounds on paper towel. Pour sea salt onto each slice and let sit for 30 minutes. This will draw out excess moisture and help decrease eggplant mush. After 30 minutes, place on oiled parchment paper and top each slice with a bit more coconut oil and garlic powder. Roast in oven for about 20 – 30 minutes at 400 degrees. Keep close eye to make sure they don't burn.

Making the Crust and Assembling the Pizza:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. On a cutting board, place a large piece of parchment paper and spray it with nonstick cooking oil.

Soak your cauliflower in a bowl of salted hot water for several hours. Dry thoroughly and cut up the florets into small chunks and discard the stems. Pulse florets in food processor for about 20 – 30 seconds until cauliflowers resembles flour. This should yield you about 2 – 3 cups of cauliflower. Place the flour in a microwave safe bowl and cover. Microwave for 4 minutes. Dump cooked cauliflower onto a clean dish towel and allow to cool for at least 5 minutes before you will need to wring out the moisture. If you are antsy, put dish gloves on before wringing out—you will burn your hand otherwise.



Cauliflower Snow

Once cauliflower is cool enough to handle, wrap it up in the dish towel (do not use paper towel. It will seep through) and wring it out. You want to squeeze out as much moisture out as

possible. I cannot stress this enough. The more moisture you squeeze out, the crisper the crust will be.



Yum! Cauliflower Juice

Once you've wrung out as much water as possible, dumped cauliflower into a bowl and add your seasonings plus cheese. Finally, add egg and mix with spatula or wooden spoon.

Once mixture is evenly combined, wet hands and place mixture on well-oiled parchment paper. Pat it into a nice round crust that is about 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick. I think the thinner the better as it allows it to crisp up. Spread a little more oil onto the top of the final crust and slide the paper onto a pizza pan and put in preheated oven. Bake for 15 minutes or until edges and center brown. Once it's down, let it cool and top with an even spread of riccotta cheese, then a layer of the tomato sauce and roasted eggplant. Bake all together for another 8 – 10 minutes. Once done, let cool for a couple of minutes and then top with arugala and some sea salt.



Crust – Phase One



Crust – Phase 2 + 3 (Ricotta + Tomato Sauce)



Crust – Phase 4 (Eggplant)



The Final Phase – Arugula. Delicioso!