



01/27/2014 by TRICIA CORNELL

DECONSTRUCT YOUR PIZZA AT BLACK SHEEP



Brenda Johnson / Heavy Table

The magic of a pizza is the way everything melds together. If you're tasting the crust, the sauce, and the cheese separately, there's probably something wrong. Good pizza is like a Crosby, Stills and Nash chord: a brand-new, singular flavor made from three separate ones.

Why, then, was it so utterly satisfying when, on a whim (was it Polar Vortex-inspired madness?), we decided to deconstruct our Black Sheep pizza and order the crust, the sauce, the meatballs, and the cheese separately?

At Black Sheep, you can find all the essential parts of a pizza on the appetizer menu: an oblong puff of crust, a bowl of sauce on the size, a platter of meatballs, and a bowl of ricotta floating in honey.

Taking your pizza apart like this slows down the experience, makes it more communal, like a mezze table. And it's civilizing: You can use your fingers to tear off a chunk of bread, but you need your spoon to dip into the sauce and the cheese and your fork and knife to (politely) eat a meatball.

And it's so satisfying because Black Sheep has (damn near) perfected each element.



Brenda Johnson / Heavy Table

Let's take the sauce. I am not really a sauce gal. More often than not, it's white pizza for me, sometimes with a béchamel, but preferably with a thin layer of strong cheese and some funky toppings (which perfectly describes my favorite Black Sheep pizza: oyster mushroom, smoked mozzarella, rosemary, and garlic). Too often, pizza sauce is syrupy or burnt-tasting or clouded over with too much oregano and basil. Not at Black Sheep, where the sauce has recognizable bits of fleshy plum tomatoes, still silky and bright and tomato-flavored, even when it coats a pan of meatballs that just came out of the 800°F oven. Now that is sauce worth ordering — on its own, or on a pie.



Brenda Johnson / Heavy Table

And the meatballs aren't an essential part of a pizza, but they were definitely an essential part of our pizza mezze experience. On Black Sheep's pizza, the meatballs come sliced and browned. On their own, they come straight out of the oven in their own little casserole dish, so hot your server will put a pizza tray around it to protect any forgetful fingers. The meatballs, a mixture of pork and beef, are peppery, dense, and meaty, not fluffy; there's clearly very little filler in there, if any at all. But, take heed: The chefs at Black Sheep and I agree on many things, including the benefit of a heavy hand with the salt. If you disagree, you might not take to the meatballs, or to the crust, for that matter.



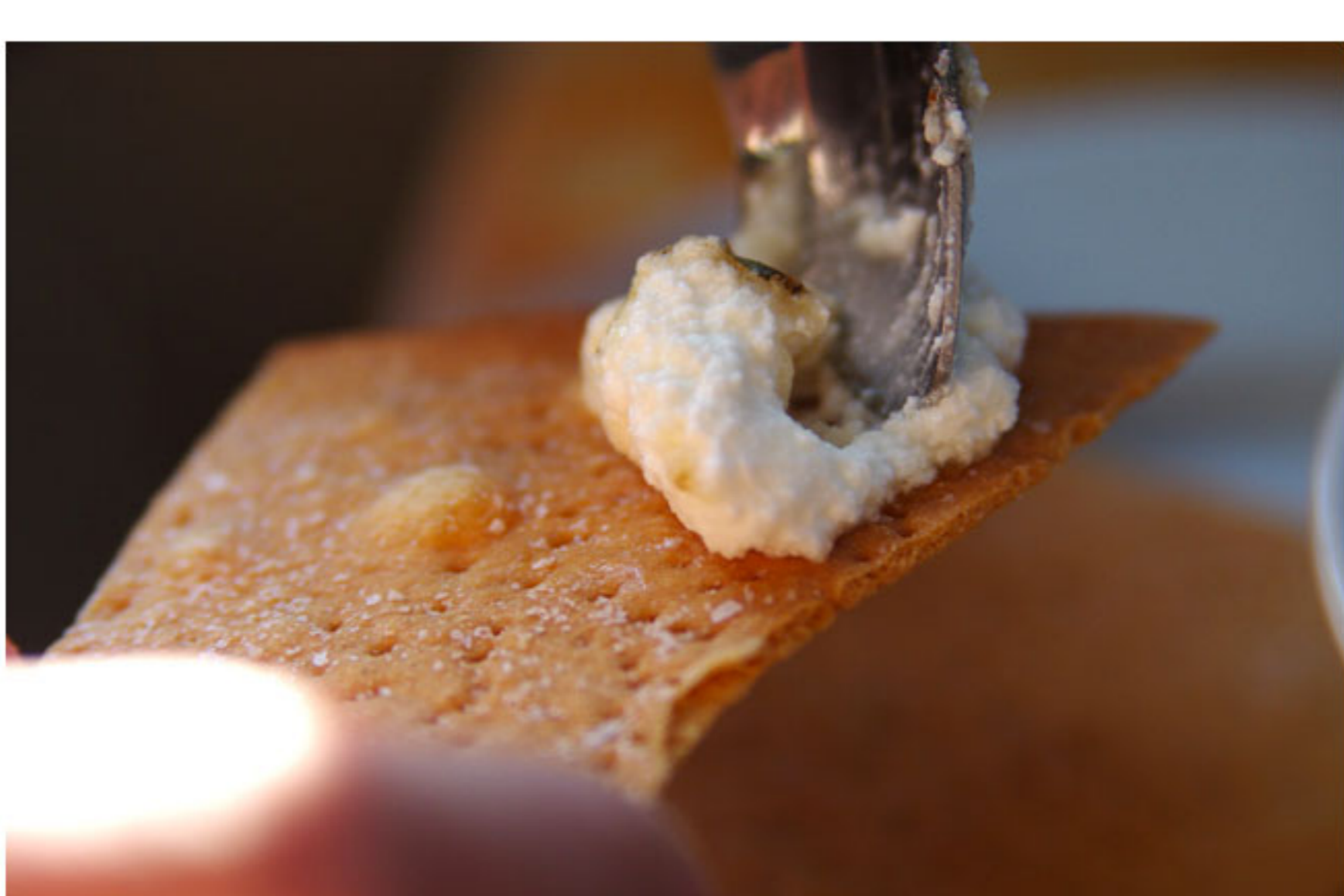
Brenda Johnson / Heavy Table

Pizza crust on its own could just be warm bread (nothing wrong with that). But Black Sheep's crust is ever-so-slightly sour, with big, airy bubbles (two clues that the dough had a nice, long cold fermentation stage called a retard). It is chewy and thick and just as delicious when it cools down a bit (if it makes it that long) as when it first comes to the table hot out of the coal oven.



Brenda Johnson / Heavy Table

That dough is what you want to hold up your spoonfuls of ricotta and honey. The ricotta appetizer comes with paper thin crackers, which are fine, but the salty dough, the sweet honey, and the creamy cheese — just crazy smooth — is what you're after.



Brenda Johnson / Heavy Table

It's not the way you'd want to order your pizza anywhere else, but at Black Sheep the pizza — the quintessential more-than-the-sum-of-its-parts dish — breaks down into delicious, elegantly made parts.

Black Sheep Coal Fired Pizza, 600 Washington Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55401; 612.342.2625; 512 Robert St, St. Paul, MN 55102; 651.227.4337



Brenda Johnson / Heavy Table



Doodle 4 Google Contest

google.com/doodle4...

Enter your students before the submission period ends on 3/20.



Making IT Serve Your Needs

[LEARN MORE >](#)**ATOMIC DATA****the walking CARDIO machine**

Request your **FREE INFO KIT** & **FREE \$200 Savings Card***

[LEARN MORE](#)

BONUS! \$200 OFF * see site for details

BOWFLEX TreadClimber

Tweets

[Follow](#)

Heavy Table @heavytable 24m
Yoga music aside, we dug our experience at BoneYard in Uptown:
heavytable.com/boneyard-kitch...
pic.twitter.com/b9dnRZj7nF



Heavy Table @heavytable 17 Mar
Pupusa heaven at El Centro:
heavytable.com/oroco-pupusa-...
pic.twitter.com/0UdC8fISww



Tweet to @heavytable