

The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

THE JOY OF ENGLISH MUFFIN PIZZAS

Try My 'Famous' Recipe!

When I was in high school, I was usually the planner for my group of friends — and one thing we liked to do was put together group dates. One of my favorite activities to plan was what I called the “English Muffin Pizza Date.”

Most of the evening was spent in the middle of the kitchen, with three or four couples huddled around the counter. We spent way too much time slicing English muffins, scooping Costco pizza sauce out of a #10 can, and chopping mountains of mushrooms and peppers. We were a bunch of teenagers on a group date, and we were awkwardly doing our best to flirt.

I would playfully mess up my date's “pizza” — a muffin bottom and dollop of sauce — by overloading it with a mountain of sausage and olives. She retaliated with an extra spoonful of sauce on top of my already-finished pizza. (Ahh, the good old days!) Those pizza dates were a wonderful experience. Not only could each of us kids make exactly the pizza we wanted to eat, we thoroughly enjoyed the process of cooking together. It gave us a chance to converse, flirt, and play while our hands stayed busy. Plus, the pizzas were pretty tasty!

Over the years, I have kept my recipe for turning a humble English muffin into a delicious poor man's pie, and now I'm sharing it with you.

October is National Pizza Month, so there's no better time to try your hand at cooking English muffin pizzas. If you'd rather not spend time in the kitchen, that's okay, too! We have great pizza shops here in San Antonio. Open up this newsletter and check Page 2 for a list of my favorites, and details on our pizza gift card giveaway.

Happy eating,

—*Michael Packard*

Text the name of your favorite pizzeria to us at **210-756-5399** or email it to **Giveaway@PackardFirm.com**, and we'll enter you into a drawing to win a \$50 gift card to the pizza place of your choice.”

Michael's Famous English Muffin Pizza (Serves 2)

Ingredients

- 2 English muffins, sliced in half
- 1 can of pizza sauce
- Shredded cheese, to taste
- Toppings of choice (I like breakfast bacon and pepperoni, or Canadian bacon and pineapple. Back in high school, bulk breakfast sausage, olives, peppers, onions, and other vegetables were also big hits.)



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
2. Distribute two English muffin halves per person.
3. Spread sauce on your muffin halves — these will be your pizza crust.
4. Add your toppings of choice directly to the sauce. (It's better to put the toppings on first and then add the cheese. The melted cheese keeps the sausage and olives from crumbling off while you eat!)
5. Sprinkle with cheese.
6. Spread the muffin halves out on a cookie sheet.
7. Bake the pizzas for 10-15 minutes, until the cheese is melted and the muffins are golden.
8. Enjoy the best date ever!

HAVE A SPOOKY GOOD TIME

While Keeping Safety in Mind

Halloween is all about letting the *ghoul* times roll, but monsters and ghosts aren't the only things parents need to worry about this holiday. Most older kids don't want an adult chaperoning — they want to venture off with their friends to enjoy the night all on their own.

Here are a few safety tips so that you and your older kids can enjoy the spooky evening with no worries.

Plan a route and curfew.

Some older kids still love the nostalgia of trick-or-treating, or maybe they plan to pull some Halloween pranks with their friends. Whatever the reason may be, they may want to enjoy the evening without a parent.

One of the best ways to make sure they're staying safe is to plan a route and a curfew. Pick and choose which routes you feel comfortable with them going on, either somewhere nearby or somewhere in the neighborhood. And choosing a curfew time is essential so you know when to expect their return. This way if something happens and you cannot reach them or they aren't back in time, you have a general idea of where they can be on the route.

Pack the essentials.

Always make sure your child has their phone on them in case of an emergency, no matter if it's to call you or an emergency line. You could even share locations so that you're able to track where they are or use another location tracking app like Life360 or FamiSafe that's available on your devices.

If they plan to stay out for a while, have your child take water bottles, flashlights, and even a small first-aid kit with them. They actually come in handy when exploring the Halloween night and the unexpected happens.

Older kids deserve a bit of freedom, as long as they can do it responsibly. Consider these tips to make sure the night is trick-free and full of the best treats.



WE'LL FINANCE YOUR PIZZA FIX

Text to Win a \$50 Gift Card!

When my family isn't in the mood to make English muffin pizzas at home, we like to support the pizzerias in our community. If you've never tried these spots, I recommend adding them to your list of restaurants to enjoy during National Pizza Month.

Big Lou's Pizza (BigLousPizza-SATX.com): Big Lou's is home to the famous 42-inch pizza. It's truly Texas-sized, and the novelty is worth it every time. My kids love splitting one enormous pie! You can have the giant pizza with any of Big Lou's signature topping combinations, which range from white pizza (olive oil, mozzarella, tomatoes, and Italian seasoning) to BBQ pizza (two kinds of cheese with homemade barbecue sauce). Or, you can build your own.

Ray's Pizzeria (RaysPizzeria.com): Ray's is a family-owned business that has been making great New York-style slices since 2009. They have a fantastic lunch deal that I always recommend. If you're not feeling pizza, you can also find cold and hot subs, chicken wings, calzones, stromboli, pasta, and more on the menu.

Mellow Mushroom (MellowMushroom.com): I love the laid-back atmosphere at Mellow Mushroom, and their stone-baked pies are wonderful. My favorite paired pizza toppings are breakfast bacon and pepperoni, or Canadian bacon and pineapple (controversial, I know!) If you are like me, then try their Pacific Rim pizza. It comes piled with mozzarella, ham, bacon, caramelized onions, pineapple, and jalapeños.

I'm so excited about pizza month that I'd love to buy you a pie. **Text your favorite pizza place to me at 210-756-5399 or email it to Giveaway@PackardFirm.com, and I'll put your name in a drawing to win a \$50 gift card to the pizza place of your choice — either your favorite or one on my list!**

Or, if you prefer, I'll get you a grocery store card so you can try English muffin pizza if you'd like. It's tastier than you might think.

Good luck!

—Michael Packard

5 WAYS YOUR EMPLOYER IS PUTTING YOU IN DANGER

No Treats Here — Only Tricks!

When a kid looking for candy says, “Trick or treat!” they’re giving you a choice. Would you rather drop a Twix bar in their bucket, or shout “boo!”? Halloween is full of these opportunities for good old-fashioned fun. But in our experience, the lightheartedness stops at the workplace.

Many employers here in Texas play tricks on their employees — but not the fun kind. They deceive, mislead, and mistreat their team, especially when someone is injured on the job. Here are five tricky ways employers put their workers in danger:

1. They don’t have true workers’ compensation insurance. Most of the time if somebody is injured on the job, the employer is responsible for the medical expenses — and a small company might not have enough money to pay.

2. They make it hard to report an injury. Sometimes, a supervisor will try to sweep your injury under the rug and discourages you from making a report or filing a workers’ compensation claim. Follow your gut and make a report.

3. They force you to get treatment through the company doctor, and then slow down the process. Taking a suspiciously long time to coordinate treatment for your workplace injury isn’t by accident. The longer you wait to get treatment, the worse it is for your claim.

4. They put you back on the job too soon after an injury. Sometimes, you will get thrown back on full duty. Other times, they switch your job duties without proper training. Many times, they’re hoping you’ll either quit, or give them grounds to fire you for doing poor work.

5. They fire you and lie about the real reason. If you filed a claim report about an injury and were fired soon after for “being two minutes late” or another minor infraction, the real reason might be your injury claim.

None of this behavior is acceptable, and you shouldn’t stand for it! If you’ve experienced something like this— or if you have a friend or family member in this situation with their employer — reach out to our team for help. The sooner you do, the sooner the mistreatment will stop.



TAKE A BREAK



- Bats
- Grave
- Monster
- Broomstick
- Halloween
- Scarecrow
- Cemetery
- Harvest
- Skeleton
- Creepy
- Maze
- Treats

SPOOKY SPAGHETTI AND EYEBALLS



Inspired by FavFamilyRecipes.com

Ingredients

- 24 oz frozen meatballs
- 2-3 slices of mozzarella cheese
- 16 oz spaghetti noodles
- Sliced black olives
- 24-oz jar spaghetti sauce

Directions

1. Cook frozen meatballs according to package instructions, then keep warm in oven on low heat.
2. In a large pot, bring water to a boil and add spaghetti noodles. Cook until tender and drain.
3. In a small pot, heat spaghetti sauce over medium heat until warm.
4. After everything is cooked, mix noodles and spaghetti sauce together, then put the mixture into a serving bowl.
5. Slice the meatballs in half and mix half of the slices into spaghetti. Top the spaghetti with the remaining meatball slices with the flat sides up.
6. Cut slices of mozzarella cheese into circles and place one slice on each of the flat-topped meatballs. Then, put one black olive over each cheese circle to form the eyeballs. Serve and enjoy!

The Packard Family Is Here to Help Your Family

Personal Injury
Social Security Disability
Car Accidents
Special Needs Planning

- 1 Michael's Famous Pizza Recipe
- 2 Halloween Safety Tips
Enter to Win a \$50 Pizza Gift Card
- 3 5 Scary Situations Employers Create
Spooky Spaghetti and Eyeballs
- 4 How Did Harry Houdini Pass Away?

REMEMBERING THE WORLD'S GREATEST MAGICIAN

And His Untimely Demise

The idea of magic has captivated audiences for generations. Their tricks and illusions defy not only common reasoning but sometimes even death itself. While we've had the opportunity to watch some great magicians on television or at live performances in Las Vegas, few have left a greater impact on spectators than Harry Houdini.

Houdini got his first taste of the spotlight when he was only 9 years old as a trapeze artist. Before long, he moved on to card tricks and then even started experimenting with escape tricks using handcuffs — which proved to be a big hit. He continued to advance his escape artist skills until he ended up touring across America and Europe.

Although Houdini repeatedly defied death in his shows for a number of years, it finally caught up to him in 1926. During a show in Albany, New York, Houdini shattered his ankle while performing his famous Chinese water torture cell trick. He finished the show and continued his tour which took him to Canada where he gave a lecture in Montreal, Quebec. He spoke with some of the students after, and someone asked about his alleged ability to withstand hard punches to the abdomen. According to a witness, Sam Smilovitz, when Houdini confirmed that the rumors were true, a student named J. Gordon Whitehead abruptly delivered "four or five terribly forcible, deliberate, well-directed blows" to Houdini's stomach. According to reports, he'd been sitting — probably because of his recently injured ankle — and had no time to prepare for the punches.

Houdini didn't think twice about the incident, but later that night he reported discomfort in his abdomen. Despite worsening symptoms, he pressed on to Detroit, Michigan, and got a fever of 104 degrees F, cold sweats, and even fatigue. During the opening night of his show in Detroit, Houdini promptly collapsed. He was taken to the hospital where doctors removed his appendix which they confirmed had ruptured a few days prior. Unfortunately, he passed away from peritonitis shortly after this on Halloween. Some people believe his appendix might have ruptured with or without the blows from J. Gordon Whitehead, but many historians still believe that this is what caused Houdini's ultimate demise.

Houdini's memory still lives on almost a century after his death. We'll likely never see another magician who can amaze and bewitch a global audience in the same manner — he was surely one of a kind.

