

Intelligent pizza

Gigio and Edena Palazzo take their pizza very, very seriously. Though they do offer slices (as well as pies) at their new Lower East Side restaurant, Palá, that's about the only thing the artisanal pizzeria has in common with your corner pizza shop. While gourmet toppings like zucchini flowers, speck, sautéed pumpkin and smoked cod fish certainly stand out in this pepperoni-dominated world. Palá's crust is what makes its pizza truly unique.

After eating his way through the disappointing offerings of NYC's slice shops Gigio decided that the way to create a new type of pie was to model the baking process on that of good bread. He enlisted the help of master pizzaiolo and chemist Francesco Etzi, who, with his crew, now blend anywhere from nine to fourteen flours—not one of them white—into a liquid dough with plenty of twice-filtered water and minimal yeast. The dough rises for two to five days (a regular pizza shop leaves the dough for mere hours), resulting in a pie that not only tastes remarkably different—the crackerlike crust is light and crispy, and the toppings rich but sparse—but also is much healthier than your average pizza; Palá's pie is easier for your body to digest. Of course, when faced with an odd-looking multicolored slice, a kid who's stuck on plain red-and-white pizza might not care that the PH of this crust is the same as that of his stomach. Thankfully, the folks at Palá will accommodate requests for plain, broccoli-free pies, and will even create a lactose-free creation on request. Palá's pies do take around 25 minutes to prepare, so bring the crayons.



*Palá, 198 Allen St between Houston and Stanton Sts (212-614-7252, www.pala-ny.com).
Subway: F, V to Second Ave–Lower East Side; J, M, Z to Delancey–Essex Sts. Tue–Thu 3pm–12am; Fri 3pm–1am; Sat noon–1am; Sun noon–12am. Table service available after 5pm. Slices \$3–\$4.50. Pies \$12–\$18.*