

= Chuck E. Cheese 's =

Chuck E. Cheese 's (formerly Chuck E. Cheese 's Pizza Time Theatre and Chuck E. Cheese 's Pizza) is a chain of American family entertainment centers and restaurants . The chain is the primary brand of CEC Entertainment , Inc. and is headquartered in Irving , Texas . The establishment serves pizza and other menu items , complemented by arcade games , amusement rides , and animatronic displays as a focus of entertainment for the entire family . The brand derives its name from its main animatronic character Chuck E. Cheese , a comedic mouse who sings and interacts with guests .

Chuck E. Cheese 's Pizza Time Theatre in San Jose , California , was the first location to open in 1977 . The concept was authored by Atari co @-@ founder Nolan Bushnell , credited with bringing video games such as Pong to the mainstream . The Pizza Time Theatre was the first family restaurant to integrate food , animated entertainment , and an indoor arcade . The chain merged with competitor Showbiz Pizza Place in 1984 , forming Showbiz Pizza Time , Inc . In the early 1990s , the company unified the two brands renaming every location to Chuck E. Cheese 's Pizza . They redesigned the logo in 1994 , dropping Pizza from each store 's name . In 1998 , Showbiz Pizza Time , Inc. became CEC Entertainment , Inc . , and the company operates 590 locations as of 2015 .

= = Corporate history = =

Chuck E. Cheese 's , originally referred to as Chuck E. Cheese ? s Pizza Time Theater , was founded by Atari founder Nolan Bushnell who was seeking to expand the purview of video game arcades beyond more adult locations like pool halls to a kid and family friendly venue . Bushnell ? s experience in the amusement park industry , as well as his fondness of The Walt Disney Company , was influential in the conceptualization of the Pizza Time Theatre concept . The first location opened in San Jose , California in 1977 , and was labeled as the first family restaurant to integrate food , cheap animated entertainment , and an indoor arcade . In 1978 , Bushnell purchased the Pizza Time Theatre concept from Atari 's then @-@ corporate parent , Warner Communications .

= = = Franchising = = =

As the restaurant became increasingly successful , he began to franchise , resulting in a co @-@ development agreement between Bushnell and Robert Brock of Topeka Inn Management in 1979 . The agreement handed Brock exclusive franchising rights for opening Pizza Time Theatres in sixteen states across the southern and midwestern United States , while also forming a company subdivision , " Pizza Show Biz " , to develop the Pizza Time Theatres .

= = = ShowBiz Pizza Place = = =

In November 1978 , Brock met Aaron Fechter of Creative Engineering , Inc . Concerned that Fechter ? s animatronics would be too strong a competition for Bushnell ? s work , Brock requested that Bushnell release him from the co @-@ development agreement , citing misrepresentation . In December 1979 , Brock and Fechter formed ? Showbiz Pizza Place Inc ? , severing Brock 's business relationship with Bushnell . ShowBiz Pizza Place was conceptually identical to Pizza Time Theatre in all aspects except for animation , which would be provided by Creative Engineering . Showbiz Pizza Place opened its first location on March 3 , 1980 , in Kansas City , Missouri .

Upon the opening of ShowBiz Pizza Place , Bushnell sued Brock and Topeka Inn Management over breach of contract . Brock immediately issued a counter @-@ suit against Bushnell , citing misrepresentation . The court case began in March 1980 , eventually settling out of court with Showbiz agreeing to pay Pizza Time Theatre a portion of its profits over the following decade . During this period , Topeka Inn Management also changed its name to Brock Hotel Corporation and moved its headquarters to Irving , Texas . Both restaurants experienced increased success as the

video game industry became more robust , and , to maintain competition , both franchises continually modified and diversified their animatronic shows .

= = = Mergers and restructuring = = =

In 1981 , Pizza Time Theatre went public ; however , the evolving video game industry and the video game crash of 1983 resulted in significant losses for Pizza Time Theatre , which lost \$ 15 million in 1983 , and by 1984 , Bushnell ' s debts were insurmountable , resulting in the filing of Chapter 11 bankruptcy for Pizza Time Theatre Inc . Showbiz then bought the foundering company , recreating itself as Showbiz Pizza Time Inc .

After the merger , both restaurants continued operating under the different titles , while major financial restructuring had begun , eventually becoming publicly traded in 1989 , with sales increasing by 8 @. @ 3 % . During this period , Creative Engineering began to sever ties with ShowBiz Pizza Time (they officially left the company in September 1990) , eventually resulting in the unification of its mixed characters . By 1992 , all restaurants assumed the name of Chuck E. Cheese ' s Pizza . However , the name was changed to Chuck E. Cheese ' s in 1995 after a 1994 redesigning of the concept . In 1998 , the company renamed itself CEC Entertainment , Inc . . Part of this renaming was related to a move from the NASDAQ to the NYSE . In 1999 , CEC Entertainment , Inc. bought out competitor Discovery Zone . Chuck E. Cheese ' s celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2007 .

In February 2014 , Apollo Global Management acquired CEC Entertainment for \$ 54 per share , or about US \$ 950 million . There are 577 open locations throughout North America , South America , and the Middle East .

= = = Mascot redesign = = =

In 2012 , Chuck E. Cheese ' s announced that their Chuck E. Cheese mascot would receive a major makeover to make the character look more like a rockstar . Jaret Reddick , lead singer of the musical group Bowling for Soup , was hired as the new voice of Chuck E. Cheese , who had been voiced by Duncan Brannan for many years .

The newly designed character was featured in a series of advertising campaign spots produced by Sugar Film Productions , Reel FX and BREED .

= = International expansion = =

In the early 80s , the restaurant opened in Australia under the name " Charlie Cheese ' s Pizza Playhouse " due to the word " chuck " meaning to throw up in Australia .

During the early 80s , a Chuck E. Cheese opened at least one restaurant in Hong Kong , though they soon closed due to the 1984 bankruptcy .

= = Products = =

= = = Menu items = = =

While its primary focus is pizza , Chuck E. Cheese ' s also offers cold @-@ cut sandwiches , buffalo wings , salad bars and desserts . Some stores are also used as " test " locations which feature new Chuck E. Cheese foods . Certain Chuck E. Cheese locations also offer beer and wine .

Starting on November 13 , 2012 , new gluten @-@ free menu items are available at more than 500 locations in the U.S. and Canada . This currently includes a choice of a personal @-@ size cheese pizza and an individual chocolate cupcake .

= = Entertainment = =

= = = Arcade and currency = = =

From the time of the company 's inception to today , one of the main draws for the stores has been the arcade . The arcade games primarily consist of either redemption games or video arcade games .

The brass tokens issued by the company for use in their arcades exist in numerous varieties , and are collected by exonomia enthusiasts . The company once tested a card access method for use with their arcade and skill games in one location . The test location would no longer use tokens , and instead use a refillable card to access credits , which replace tokens , and points , which replace tickets . However , this was later scrapped . It was tested under different names , including " Chuck E. ' s Super Discount Card " and " Chuck E. Token Card " . This method is currently being tested in some markets again . Instead of electronic tickets like the former cards , Patrons still carry paper tickets and the card just take the place of the metal tokens . CECE , or CEC Entertainment , has called the new system " Play Pass " .

= = = Animatronic figures = = =

Along with the arcade , the other main draw for the centers since the beginning was its animatronic show , until the mid @-@ 1990s . More recently , less attention has been placed on animatronics . However , there are now several different styles of animatronic shows in use within the company , depending on when the location opened , whether it was renovated , and other factors .

When the first location opened in 1977 , the animatronic characters were featured in framed portraits hanging on the walls of the main dining area , but they are no longer in use today . The show featured Crusty the cat (the first character to face retirement as he was soon replaced with Mr. Munch in 1978) , Pasqually the singing chef , Jasper T. Jowls , the Warblettes , and the main focus of the show , Chuck E. Cheese . Later , restaurants also added " Cabaret " shows in separate rooms of each restaurant . They also frequently changed out the sole female character , named Helen Henny , in the main show . They achieved this by applying a cosmetic change to the existing robot , as well as a change of stage backdrop , to match the performer .

Beginning in 1998 , the company 's show installed into new stores , referred to as " Studio C " , consists of a single animated Chuck E. Cheese character alongside large television monitors , lighting effects , and interactive elements . The other characters appear as puppets on the TV screens . In some markets , the company has also tried a new store concept that omits the animated show entirely . This is the Circle of Lights stage which either consists of a live Chuck E. Cheese costume character or an animatronic in a futuristic light stage with large television monitors .

The members that currently perform in the animatronic show are :

Chuck E. Cheese ? vocals

Helen Henny ? vocals

Mr. Munch ? vocals , keyboards

Jasper T. Jowls ? vocals , guitar

Pasqually E. Pieplate ? vocals , percussion

= = = Costumed shows = = =

There are two types of costumed shows used by Chuck E. Cheese 's : the LIVE ! show and the Road show . The LIVE ! show is performed at the front of the stage in the showroom , whenever a child is celebrating a birthday . The live show is a way of pumping up the crowd before a customized rendition of " Happy Birthday " is sung to the child that is celebrating the birthday (" I say Happy , you say Birthday ...) . A costumed Chuck E. Cheese dances with the guests and sings , while being accompanied by the cast members . The Road show is a performance by a costumed Chuck E. Cheese character , and is performed outside the normal showroom . Children are gathered via the

public announcement system or by Chuck E. Cheese himself . Chuck E. Cheese wants the kids to dance in order to win free tickets . The free tickets are thrown at the end of the performance for all the kids that participated . Chuck E. comes out every hour on the half hour (12 : 30 , 1 : 30 , etc .) . The songs Chuck E. and the kids dance to are usually well @-@ known classic songs such as " If You 're Happy and You Know It " and " Head , Shoulders , Knees , and Toes " .