

# Pizza

**Pizza** is a traditional Italian dish consisting of a yeasted flatbread typically topped with tomato sauce and cheese and baked in an oven. It can also be topped with additional vegetables, meats, and condiments, and can be made without cheese.

The term *pizza* was first recorded in the 10th century, in a Latin manuscript from the Southern Italian town of Gaeta in Lazio, on the border with Campania.<sup>[1]</sup> Modern pizza was invented in Naples, and the dish and its variants have since become popular and common in many areas of the world.<sup>[2]</sup> In 2009, upon Italy's request, Neapolitan pizza was registered with the European Union as a Traditional Speciality Guaranteed dish.<sup>[3][4]</sup> The *Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana* (True Neapolitan Pizza Association), a non-profit organization founded in 1984 with headquarters in Naples, aims to "promote and protect... the true Neapolitan pizza".<sup>[5]</sup>

Pizza is one of the most popular foods in the world and a common fast food item in Europe and North America. Many independent or chain restaurants, cafes, and fast food outlets offer pizza. Restaurants or chains specializing in pizza are pizzerias. Pizza delivery is common in some parts of the world.

Pizza is sold fresh or frozen, either whole or in portions.<sup>[6]</sup> Various types of ovens are used to cook them and many varieties exist. Several similar dishes are prepared from ingredients commonly used in pizza preparation, such as calzone and stromboli. In the United States, pizza is usually eaten out of hand after dividing into slices from a large pizza or small pizzetta as a whole. In Italy, pizza is eaten with a fork and knife in restaurants, but is also sold to take away and eaten out of hand. Frozen pizza became popular in the late 20th century.

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## Pizza



Pizza Margherita, the archetype of Neapolitan pizza

<b>Type</b>	Flatbread
<b>Course</b>	Lunch or dinner
<b>Place of origin</b>	Italy
<b>Region or state</b>	Campania (Naples)
<b>Created by</b>	Raffaele Esposito
<b>Serving temperature</b>	Hot or warm
<b>Main ingredients</b>	Dough, sauce (usually tomato sauce), cheese
<b>Variations</b>	Calzone, panzerotti, stromboli

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## Etymology

The word "pizza" (Italian: [ˈpittsa]) first appeared in a Latin text from the central Italian town of Gaeta, then still part of the Byzantine Empire, in 997 AD; the text states that a tenant of certain property is to give the bishop of Gaeta *duodecim pizze* ("twelve pizzas") every Christmas Day, and another twelve every Easter Sunday.<sup>[1][7]</sup>

Suggested etymologies include:

- Byzantine Greek and Late Latin *pitta* > *pizza*, *cf.* Modern Greek *pitta* bread and the Apulia and Calabrian (then Byzantine Italy) *pitta*,<sup>[8]</sup> a round flat bread baked in the oven at high temperature sometimes with toppings. The word *pitta* can in turn be traced to either Ancient Greek πίκτη (*pikte*), "fermented pastry", which in Latin became "picta", or Ancient Greek πίσσα (*pissa*, Attic πίττα, *pitta*), "pitch",<sup>[9][10]</sup> or *pétea*, "bran" (*pētītēs*, "bran bread").<sup>[11]</sup>
- The Etymological Dictionary of the Italian Language explains it as coming from dialectal *pinza* "clamp", as in modern Italian *pinze* "pliers, pincers, tongs, forceps". Their origin is from Latin *pinser* "to pound, stamp".<sup>[12]</sup>
- The Lombardic word *bizzo* or *pizzo* meaning "mouthful" (related to the English words "bit" and "bite"), which was brought to Italy in the middle of the 6th century AD by the invading Lombards.<sup>[1][13]</sup>

## History

Foods similar to pizza have been made since the neolithic age. Records of people adding other ingredients to bread to make it more flavorful can be found throughout ancient history. The ancient Greeks supplemented their bread with oils, herbs, and cheese,<sup>[14][15]</sup> and in the 6th century BC, the soldiers in Persian King Darius I's armies baked flatbreads with cheese and dates on top of their battle shields.<sup>[16][17]</sup> An early reference to a pizza-like food occurs in the Aeneid, when Celaeno, queen of the Harpies, foretells that the Trojans would not find peace until they are forced by hunger to eat their tables (Book III). In Book VII, Aeneas and his men are served a meal that includes round cakes (like pita bread) topped with cooked vegetables. When they eat the bread, they realize that these are the "tables" prophesied by Celaeno.<sup>[18]</sup>



A pizzaiolo in 1830

Antica Pizzeria  
Port'Alba in Naples

Modern pizza evolved from similar flatbread dishes in Naples in the 18th or early 19th century.<sup>[19]</sup> Prior to that time, flatbread was often topped with ingredients such as garlic, salt, lard, cheese, and basil. It is uncertain when tomatoes were first added and there are many conflicting claims.<sup>[19]</sup> Until about 1830, pizza was sold from open-air stands and out of pizza bakeries, and pizzerias keep this old tradition alive today.

A popular contemporary legend holds that the archetypal pizza, *pizza Margherita*, was invented in 1889, when the Royal Palace of Capodimonte commissioned the Neapolitan pizzaiolo (pizza maker) Raffaele Esposito to create a pizza in honor of the visiting Queen Margherita. Of the three different pizzas he created, the Queen strongly preferred a pizza swathed in the colors of the Italian flag: red (tomato), green (basil), and white (mozzarella). Supposedly, this kind of pizza was then named after the Queen,<sup>[20]</sup> although recent research casts doubt on this legend.<sup>[21]</sup> An official letter of recognition from the Queen's "head of service" remains on display in Esposito's shop, now called the Pizzeria Brandi.<sup>[22]</sup>

Pizza was brought to the United States with Italian immigrants in the late nineteenth century,<sup>[23]</sup> and first appeared in areas where Italian immigrants concentrated. The country's first pizzeria, Lombardi's, opened in 1905.<sup>[24]</sup> Following World War II, veterans returning from the Italian Campaign after being introduced to Italy's native cuisine proved a ready market for pizza in particular.<sup>[25]</sup> Since then pizza consumption has exploded in the U.S.<sup>[26]</sup> Pizza chains such as Domino's, Pizza Hut, and Papa John's, pizzas from take and bake pizzerias, and chilled or frozen pizzas from supermarkets make pizza readily available nationwide. It is so ubiquitous, thirteen percent of the U.S. population consumes pizza on any given day.<sup>[27]</sup>

## Preparation

Pizza is prepared fresh, frozen, and as portion-size slices or pieces. Methods have been developed to overcome challenges such as preventing the sauce from combining with the dough and producing a crust that can be frozen and reheated without becoming rigid. There are frozen pizzas with raw ingredients and self-rising crusts.

Another form of uncooked pizza is available from take and bake pizzerias. This pizza is assembled in the store, then sold to customers to bake in their own ovens. Some grocery stores sell fresh dough along with sauce and basic ingredients, to complete at home before baking in an oven.

### Pizza preparation



Pizza Hut chain restaurant



A wrapped, mass-produced frozen pizza to be cooked at home



Pizza dough being kneaded. After this, it is typically left undisturbed and allowed time to proof.



Pizza-eating contest



Traditional pizza dough being tossed



Various toppings being placed on pan pizzas



An uncooked Neapolitan pizza on a metal peel, ready for the oven

## Cooking

In restaurants, pizza can be baked in an oven with stone bricks above the heat source, an electric deck oven, a conveyor belt oven or, in the case of more expensive restaurants, a wood or coal-fired brick oven. On deck ovens, pizza can be slid into the oven on a long paddle, called a peel, and baked directly on the hot bricks or baked on a screen (a round metal grate, typically aluminum). Prior to use, a peel may be sprinkled with cornmeal to allow pizza to easily slide onto and off of it.<sup>[28]</sup> When made at home, it can be baked on a pizza stone in a regular oven to reproduce the effect of a brick oven. Aficionado home-chefs sometimes use a specialty wood-fired pizza oven, usually installed outdoors. Dome-shaped pizza ovens have been used for centuries<sup>[29]</sup>, which is one way to achieve true heat distribution in a wood-fired pizza oven. Another option is grilled pizza, in which the crust is baked directly on a barbecue grill. Greek pizza, like Chicago-style pizza, is baked in a pan rather than directly on the bricks of the pizza oven.

When it comes to preparation, the dough and ingredients can be combined on any kind of table. With mass production of pizza, the process can be completely automated. Most restaurants still use standard and purpose-built pizza preparation tables. Pizzerias nowadays can even opt for hi tech pizza preparation tables that combine mass production elements with traditional techniques.<sup>[30]</sup>

### **Pizza cooking**





Pizzas bake in a traditional wood-fired brick oven



A pizza baked in a wood-fired oven, being removed with a wooden peel



A cooked pizza served at a New York pizzeria

## Crust

The bottom of the pizza, called the 'crust', may vary widely according to style; thin as in a typical hand-tossed Neapolitan pizza, or thick as in a deep-dish Chicago-style. It is traditionally plain, but may also be seasoned with garlic or herbs, or stuffed with cheese. The outer edge of the pizza is sometimes referred to as the *cornicione*.<sup>[31]</sup> Pizza dough often contains sugar, both to help its yeast rise and enhance browning of the crust.<sup>[32]</sup>

Dipping sauce specifically for pizza was invented by American pizza chain Papa John's Pizza in 1984, and has since become popular when eating pizza, especially the crust.<sup>[33]</sup>



Chicago-style pizza — deep dish

## Cheese

Mozzarella is commonly used on pizza, with the highest quality buffalo mozzarella produced in the surroundings of Naples.<sup>[34]</sup> Today, other cheeses have been used as pizza ingredients (particularly Italian cheeses), including provolone, pecorino romano, ricotta, and scamorza. Less expensive processed cheeses or cheese analogues have been developed for mass-market pizzas to produce desirable qualities like browning, melting, stretchiness, consistent fat and moisture content, and stable shelf life. This quest to create the ideal and economical pizza cheese has involved many studies and experiments analyzing the impact of vegetable oil, manufacturing and culture processes, denatured whey proteins and other changes in manufacture. In 1997 it was

estimated that annual production of pizza cheese was 1 million tonnes (1,100,000 short tons) in the U.S. and 100,000 tonnes (110,000 short tons) in Europe.<sup>[35]</sup>

## Varieties

### Italy



Spinach pizza, Turin

Authentic Neapolitan pizza (*pizza napoletana*) is typically made with San Marzano tomatoes, grown on the volcanic plains south of Mount Vesuvius, and mozzarella di bufala Campana, made with milk from water buffalo raised in the marshlands of Campania and Lazio.<sup>[36]</sup> This mozzarella is protected with its own European protected designation of origin.<sup>[36]</sup> Other traditional pizzas include *pizza alla marinara*, which is topped with marinara sauce and is allegedly the most ancient tomato-topped pizza,<sup>[37]</sup> *pizza capricciosa*, which is prepared with mozzarella cheese, baked ham, mushroom, artichoke and tomato,<sup>[38]</sup> and *pizza pugliese*, prepared with tomato, mozzarella and onions.<sup>[39]</sup>

A popular variant of pizza in Italy is Sicilian pizza (locally called *sfincione* or *sfinciuni*),<sup>[40][41]</sup> a thick-crust or deep-dish pizza originating during the 17th century in Sicily: it is essentially a focaccia that is typically topped with tomato sauce and other ingredients. Until the 1860s, *sfincione* was the type of pizza usually consumed in Sicily, especially in the Western portion of the island.<sup>[42]</sup> Other variations of pizzas are also found in other regions of Italy, for example *pizza al padellino* or *pizza al tegamino*, a small-sized, thick-crust and deep-dish pizza typically served in Turin, Piedmont.<sup>[43][44][45]</sup>

A pizza just removed from an oven, with a close-up view of the *cornicione* (the outer edge)

A pizza quattro formaggi (Italian: ['kwattro for'maddʒ], "four cheeses") in London

## United States

Common toppings for pizza in the United States include ground beef, mushrooms, onions, pepperoni, pineapple, garlic, olives, peppers, carrots, tomatoes, spinach, anchovies, chicken, bacon, ham and sausage. Distinct regional types developed in the twentieth century, including California, Chicago, Greek, New Haven, Detroit, St. Louis, and New York styles.<sup>[26]</sup> The first pizzeria in the U.S. was opened in New York's Little Italy in 1905<sup>[46]</sup> and since then regions throughout the U.S. offer variations, including deep-dish, stuffed, pockets, turnovers, rolled and pizza-on-a-stick, each with seemingly limitless combinations of sauce and toppings.

Another variation is grilled pizza, created by taking a fairly thin, round (more typically, irregularly shaped) sheet of yeasted pizza dough, placing it directly over the fire of a grill and then turning it over once the bottom has baked and placing a thin layer of toppings on the baked side.<sup>[47]</sup> Toppings may be sliced thin to ensure that they heat through, and chunkier toppings such as sausage or peppers may be precooked before being placed on the pizza.<sup>[48]</sup> Garlic, herbs, or other ingredients are sometimes added to the pizza or the crust to maximize the flavor of the dish.<sup>[49]</sup>

Grilled pizza was offered in the United States at the Al Forno restaurant in Providence, Rhode Island<sup>[50]</sup> by owners Johanne Killeen and George Germon in 1980. Although it was inspired by a misunderstanding that confused a wood-fired brick oven with a grill, grilled pizza did exist prior to 1980, both in Italy, and in Argentina where it is known as *pizza a la parrilla*.<sup>[51]</sup> It has become a popular cookout dish, and there are even some pizza restaurants that specialize in the style. The traditional style of grilled pizza employed at Al Forno restaurant uses a dough coated with olive oil,<sup>[50]</sup> strained tomato sauce, thin slices of fresh mozzarella, and a garnish made from shaved scallions, and is served uncut.<sup>[52]</sup> The final product can be likened to flatbread with pizza toppings.<sup>[50]</sup> Another Providence establishment, Bob & Timmy's Grilled Pizza, was featured in a Providence-themed episode of the Travel Channel's *Man v. Food Nation* in 2011.<sup>[53]</sup>



Slices of New York-style pizza



Pizza banquet in the White House

## Records

The world's largest pizza was prepared in Rome in December 2012, and measured 1,261 square metres (13,570 sq ft). The pizza was named "Ottavia" in homage to the first Roman emperor Octavian Augustus, and was made with a gluten-free base.<sup>[54]</sup> The world's longest pizza was made in Naples in 2016. It was baked using a series of wheeled ovens which moved along its length, and measured 1.85 kilometres (1.15 mi).<sup>[55]</sup>

The world's most expensive pizza listed by *Guinness World Records* is a commercially available thin-crust pizza at Maze restaurant in London, United Kingdom, which costs GB£100. The pizza is wood fire-baked, and is topped with onion puree, white truffle paste, fontina cheese, baby mozzarella, pancetta, cep mushrooms, freshly picked wild mizuna lettuce, and fresh shavings of a rare Italian white truffle.<sup>[56]</sup>



There are several instances of more expensive pizzas, such as the GB£4,200 "Pizza Royale 007" at Haggis restaurant in Glasgow, Scotland, which has caviar, lobster and is topped with 24-carat gold dust, and the US\$1,000 caviar pizza made by Nino's Bellissima pizzeria in New York City, New York.<sup>[57][58]</sup> However, these are not officially recognized by *Guinness World Records*. Additionally, a pizza was made by the restaurateur Domenico Crolla that included toppings such as sunblush-tomato sauce, Scottish smoked salmon, medallions of venison, edible gold, lobster marinated in cognac, and champagne-soaked caviar. The pizza was auctioned for charity in 2007, raising GB£2,150.<sup>[59]</sup>

In 2017, the world pizza market was \$128 billion and in the US it was \$44 billion spread over 76,000 pizzerias.<sup>[60]</sup> Overall, 13% of the U.S. population aged 2 years and over, consumed pizza on any given day.<sup>[61]</sup>

## Health issues

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Some mass-produced pizzas by fast food chains have been criticized as having an unhealthy balance of ingredients. Pizza can be high in salt, fat and calories (food energy). The USDA reports an average sodium content of 5,101 mg per 14 in (36 cm) pizza in fast food chains.<sup>[62]</sup> There are concerns about negative health effects.<sup>[63]</sup> Food chains have come under criticism at various times for the high salt content of some of their meals.<sup>[64]</sup>

Frequent pizza eaters in Italy have been found to have a relatively low incidence of cardiovascular disease<sup>[65]</sup> and digestive tract cancers<sup>[66]</sup> relative to infrequent pizza eaters, although the nature of the correlation between pizza and such perceived benefits is unclear. Pizza consumption in Italy might only indicate adherence to traditional Mediterranean dietary patterns, which have been shown to have various health benefits.<sup>[66]</sup>

Some attribute the apparent health benefits of pizza to the lycopene content in pizza sauce,<sup>[67]</sup> which research indicates likely plays a role in protecting against cardiovascular disease and various cancers.<sup>[68]</sup>



A vegetarian pizza

## National Pizza Month

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National Pizza Month is an annual observance that occurs for the month of October in the United States and some areas of Canada.<sup>[69][70][71][72]</sup> This observance began in October 1984, and was created by Gerry Durnell, the publisher of *Pizza Today* magazine.<sup>[72]</sup> During this time, some people observe National Pizza Month by consuming various types of pizzas or pizza slices, or going to various pizzerias.<sup>[69]</sup>

## Similar dishes

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- Calzone and stromboli are similar dishes (a calzone is traditionally half-moon-shaped, while a stromboli is tube-shaped) that are often made of pizza dough rolled or folded around a filling.
- Panzerotti are similar to calzones, however, fried rather than baked.

- "Farinata" or "cecina".<sup>[73]</sup> A Ligurian ([farinata](#)) and Tuscan ([cecina](#)) regional dish made from chickpea flour, water, salt and olive oil. Also called [socca](#) in the [Provence](#) region of France. Often baked in a brick oven, and typically weighed and sold by the slice.
- The [Alsatian Flammekueche](#)<sup>[74]</sup> (Standard German: *Flammkuchen*, French: *Tarte flambée*) is a thin disc of dough covered in [crème fraîche](#), onions, and bacon.
- [Garlic fingers](#) is an [Atlantic Canadian](#) dish, similar to a pizza in shape and size, and made with similar dough. It is garnished with melted butter, garlic, cheese, and sometimes bacon.
- The [Anatolian Lahmajoun](#) (Arabic: *lahm bi'ajīn*; Armenian: *lahmajoun*; also *Armenian pizza* or *Turkish pizza*) is a meat-topped dough round. The bread is very thin; the layer of meat often includes chopped vegetables.<sup>[75]</sup>
- The [Levantine Manakish](#) (Arabic: *ma'ujnāt*) and [Sfiha](#) (Arabic: *lahm bi'ajīn*; also *Arab pizza*) are dishes similar to pizza.
- The [Macedonian Pastrmajlija](#) is a bread pie made from dough and meat. It is usually oval-shaped with chopped meat on top of it.
- The [Provençal Pissaladière](#) is similar to an Italian pizza, with a slightly thicker crust and a topping of cooked onions, anchovies, and olives.
- [Pizza bagel](#) is a bagel with toppings similar to that of traditional pizzas
- [Pizza bread](#) is a type of sandwich that is often served open-faced which consists of bread, pizza or tomato sauce, cheese<sup>[76]</sup> and various toppings. Homemade versions may be prepared.
- [Pizza sticks](#) may be prepared with pizza dough and pizza ingredients, in which the dough is shaped into stick forms, sauce and toppings are added, and it is then baked.<sup>[77]</sup> Bread dough may also be used in their preparation,<sup>[78]</sup> and some versions are fried.<sup>[79]</sup>
- [Pizza Rolls](#) are a frozen snack variation of traditional pizza that can include various toppings. Homemade versions may be prepared as well.
- [Okonomiyaki](#), a Japanese dish cooked on a hotplate, is often referred to as "Japanese pizza".<sup>[80]</sup>
- "Zanzibar pizza" is a street food served in Stone Town, [Zanzibar](#), [Tanzania](#). It uses a dough much thinner than pizza dough, almost like [phyllo dough](#), filled with minced beef, onions, and an egg, similar to [Moroccan bestila](#).<sup>[81]</sup>
- [Panizza](#) is a half of bread (often [baguette](#)), topped with the usual pizza ingredients, baked in an oven



A halved calzone



A tarte flambée

## See also

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## External links

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