

Pizza (/ˈpiːtsə/ PEET-sə, Italian: [ˈpittsa], Neapolitan: [ˈpittsə]) is a dish of Italian origin consisting of a usually round, flat base of leavened wheat-based dough topped with tomato, cheese, and often various other ingredients (such as anchovies, mushrooms, onions, olives, vegetables, meat, etc.), which is then baked at a high temperature, traditionally in a wood-fired oven.[1]

The term pizza was first recorded in the year 997 AD, in a Latin manuscript from the southern Italian town of Gaeta, in Lazio, on the border with Campania.[2] Raffaele Esposito is often credited for creating modern pizza in Naples.[3][4][5][6] In 2009, Neapolitan pizza was registered with the European Union as a traditional speciality guaranteed dish. In 2017, the art of making Neapolitan pizza was added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage.[7]

Pizza and its variants are among the most popular foods in the world. Pizza is sold at a variety of restaurants, including pizzerias (pizza specialty restaurants), Mediterranean restaurants, via delivery, and as street food.[8] In Italy, pizza served in a restaurant is presented unsliced, and is eaten with the use of a knife and fork.[9][10] In casual settings, however, it is typically cut into slices to be eaten while held in the hand. Pizza is also sold in grocery stores in a variety of forms, including frozen or as kits for self-assembly. They are then cooked using a home oven.

In 2017, the world pizza market was US\$128 billion, and in the US it was \$44 billion spread over 76,000 pizzerias.[11] Overall, 13% of the U.S. population aged two years and over consumed pizza on any given day

The oldest recorded usage of the word pizza is from a Latin text from the 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 (lit. 'twelve pizzas') every Christmas Day, and another twelve every Easter Sunday.[2][13]

Suggested etymologies include:

Byzantine Greek and Late Latin pitta > pizza, cf. Modern Greek pitta bread and the Apulia and Calabrian (then Byzantine Italy) pitta,[14] 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 πικτή (pikte), 'fermented pastry', which in Latin became picta, or Ancient Greek πίσσα (pissa, Attic: πίττα, pitta), 'pitch',[15][16] or πήτεια (pētea), 'bran' (πητίτης, pētītēs, 'bran bread').[17]

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 pinsere, 'to pound, stamp'.[18]

The Lombardic word bizzo or pizzio 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.[2][19] The shift b>p could be explained by the High German consonant shift, and it has been noted in this connection that in German the word Imbiss means 'snack'.

A small pizza is sometimes called a pizzetta.[20] A person who makes pizza is known as a pizzaiolo.[21]

The word pizza was borrowed from Italian into English in the 1930s; before it became well known, pizza was called "tomato pie" by English speakers. Some regional pizza variations still use the name tomato pie.

Records of pizza-like foods can be found throughout ancient history. In the 6th century BC, the Persian soldiers of the Achaemenid Empire during the rule of Darius the Great baked flatbreads with cheese and dates on top of their battle shields[23][24] and the ancient Greeks supplemented their bread with oils, herbs, and cheese.[25][26] 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.[27] In 2023, archeologists discovered a fresco in Pompeii appearing to depict a pizza-like dish among other foodstuffs and staples on a silver platter. Italy's culture minister said it "may be a distant ancestor of the modern dish".[28][29] The first mention of the word pizza comes from a notarial document written in Latin and dating to May 997 AD from Gaeta, demanding a payment of "twelve pizzas, a pork shoulder, and a pork kidney on Christmas Day, and 12 pizzas and a couple of chickens on Easter Day".[30]

Modern pizza evolved from similar flatbread dishes in Naples, Italy, in the 18th or early 19th century.[31] Before that time, flatbread was often topped with ingredients such as garlic, salt, lard, and cheese. It is uncertain when tomatoes were first added and there are many conflicting claims,[31] though it certainly could not have been before the 16th century and the Columbian Exchange. Pizza was sold from open-air stands and out of pizza bakeries until about 1830, when pizzerias in Naples started to have stanze with tables where clients could sit and eat their pizzas on the spot.[32]

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,[33] with an official letter of recognition from the Queen's "head of service" remaining to this day on display in Esposito's shop, now called the Pizzeria Brandi.[34] Later research cast doubt on this legend, undermining the authenticity of the letter of recognition, pointing that no media of the period reported about the supposed visit and that both the story and name Margherita were first promoted in the 1930s–1940s.[35][36]

Pizza was taken to the United States by Italian immigrants in the late nineteenth century[37] and first appeared in areas where they concentrated. The country's first pizzeria, Lombardi's, opened in New York City in 1905.[38] Following World War II, veterans returning from the Italian Campaign, who were introduced to Italy's native cuisine, proved a ready market for pizza in particular.[39]

The Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana (lit. 'True Neapolitan Pizza Association') is a non-profit organization founded in 1984 with headquarters in Naples that aims to promote traditional Neapolitan pizza.[40] In 2009, upon Italy's request, Neapolitan pizza was registered with the European Union as a Traditional Speciality Guaranteed dish,[41][42] and in 2017 the art of its making was included on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage

Pizza is sold fresh or frozen, and whole or in portion-size slices. 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 pizza is available from take and bake pizzerias. This pizza is assembled in the store, then sold unbaked to customers to bake in their own ovens. Some grocery stores sell fresh dough along with sauce and basic ingredients, to assemble at home before baking in an oven.

In restaurants, pizza can be baked in an oven with fire bricks above the heat source, an electric deck oven, a conveyor belt oven, or, in traditional style in a wood or coal-fired brick oven. The pizza is slid into the oven on a long paddle, called a peel, and baked directly on hot bricks, a screen (a round metal grate, typically aluminum), or whatever the oven surface is. Before use, a peel is typically sprinkled with cornmeal to allow the pizza to easily slide on and off it.[43] When made at home, a pizza can be baked on a pizza stone in a regular oven to reproduce some of the heating effect of a brick oven. Cooking directly on a metal surface results in too rapid heat transfer to the crust, burning it.[44] Some home chefs use a wood-fired pizza oven, usually installed outdoors. As in restaurants, these are often dome-shaped, as pizza ovens have been for centuries,[45] in order to achieve even heat distribution. Another variation is grilled pizza, in which the pizza is baked directly on a barbecue grill. Greek pizza, like deep dish Chicago and Sicilian style pizza, is baked in a pan rather than directly on the bricks of the pizza oven.

Most restaurants use standard and purpose-built pizza preparation tables to assemble their pizzas. Mass production of pizza by chains can be completely automated.

## Crust

Caramelised crust – its cornicione (the outer edge) – of slices of New York–style pizza

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.[46] Some pizza dough contains sugar, to help its yeast rise and enhance browning of the crust.[47]

Dipping sauce specifically for pizza was invented by American pizza chain Papa John's Pizza in 1984 and has since been adopted by some when eating pizza, especially the crust.[48]

## Cheese

Main article: Pizza cheese

Mozzarella cheese is commonly used on pizza, with the buffalo mozzarella produced in the surroundings of Naples.[49] Other cheeses are also used, 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 metric tons (1,100,000 short tons) in the U.S. and 100,000 metric tons (110,000 short tons) in Europe

### 1. Neapolitan Pizza:

Neapolitan pizza, or pizza Napoletana, is the quintessential Italian pizza, characterized by its thin crust, slightly charred edges, and minimalist toppings. Traditionally, Neapolitan pizza is made with San Marzano tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, fresh basil, and extra-virgin olive oil. It is baked in a wood-fired oven at high temperatures for a short period, resulting in a soft and chewy crust with a slight charred flavor.

### 2. New York-Style Pizza:

New York-style pizza is known for its large, thin crust that is crisp on the outside and soft on the inside. It typically features a generous layer of tomato sauce and low-moisture mozzarella cheese, often topped with ingredients such as pepperoni, mushrooms, or sausage. New York-style pizza is usually sold in large slices and eaten folded in half for easy consumption on the go.

### 3. Chicago Deep-Dish Pizza:

Chicago deep-dish pizza is a hearty and indulgent variation characterized by its thick, buttery crust and deep layers of toppings. The crust is pressed into a deep, round pan and filled with cheese, meats, and vegetables before being topped with a chunky tomato sauce. The pizza is baked slowly in a deep pan, resulting in a crispy crust and gooey, cheesy interior.

### 4. Sicilian Pizza:

Sicilian pizza, or pizza siciliana, is a square-shaped pizza with a thick, fluffy crust. It is typically topped with a rich tomato sauce, grated cheese, and ingredients such as onions, anchovies, or olives. Sicilian pizza is known for its generous portions and hearty flavors, making it a popular choice for family gatherings and casual dining.

### 5. Margherita Pizza:

Margherita pizza is a classic Italian pizza named after Queen Margherita of Savoy. It features a simple yet delicious combination of ingredients, including tomato sauce, fresh mozzarella cheese, basil leaves, and a drizzle of olive oil. The colors of the toppings—red, white, and green—mirror the colors of the Italian flag, making it a patriotic symbol of Italian cuisine.

#### 6. California-Style Pizza:

California-style pizza is a modern twist on traditional pizza, known for its creative toppings and unconventional flavor combinations. It typically features a thin, crispy crust topped with ingredients such as avocado, goat cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, and arugula. California-style pizza is influenced by the state's diverse culinary landscape and emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

#### 7. Detroit-Style Pizza:

Detroit-style pizza is a regional specialty known for its rectangular shape, thick crust, and crispy, caramelized edges. It is baked in a square pan coated with oil or butter, resulting in a golden, crunchy crust. Detroit-style pizza is typically topped with Wisconsin brick cheese, which melts into a gooey layer of cheese that extends to the edges of the crust.

#### 8. Vegetarian Pizza:

Vegetarian pizza is a versatile option that excludes meat toppings in favor of a variety of vegetables, cheeses, and herbs. Common vegetarian toppings include bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, olives, spinach, and artichoke hearts. Vegetarian pizza is popular among health-conscious diners and those looking for a lighter alternative to traditional meat-heavy pizzas.

#### 9. Vegan Pizza:

Vegan pizza is a plant-based version of traditional pizza that excludes all animal products, including cheese and meat toppings. Instead, vegan pizzas feature dairy-free cheese alternatives, such as cashew cheese or almond ricotta, along with an assortment of vegetables, herbs, and plant-based proteins. Vegan pizza appeals to those following a vegan diet or looking to reduce their consumption of animal products.

#### 10. Gourmet Pizza:

Gourmet pizza is a category that encompasses a wide range of artisanal creations featuring high-quality ingredients and innovative flavor combinations. These pizzas often showcase seasonal produce, specialty cheeses, and premium meats, as well as unconventional toppings like truffle oil, figs, prosciutto, or smoked salmon. Gourmet pizzas are a favorite among food enthusiasts and offer a unique dining experience for those seeking something beyond the traditional pizza offerings.

In conclusion, the world of pizza is as diverse as it is delicious, with each type offering its own unique blend of flavors, textures, and culinary traditions. Whether you prefer the simplicity of a classic Neapolitan pizza or the indulgence of a Chicago deep-dish, there's a pizza style to suit every taste and occasion. So, whether you're enjoying a slice at your favorite pizzeria or experimenting with homemade creations in your kitchen, pizza remains a beloved and enduring culinary staple enjoyed by people around the world.