

The History of Pizza

By far pizza has become America's favorite food over the past 50 years. The common belief is that Italians invented the pizza, however the origins go back to the ancient times. It is known that the Babylonians, Israelites, Egyptians and other ancient Middle Eastern cultures were eating flat, un-leaven bread that had been cooked in mud ovens. The bread was much like a pita, which is still common in Greece and the Middle East today.

The lower class of the Naples, Italy is believed to have created pizza in a more familiar fashion. In the late 1800s a Italian baker named Raffaele Esposito, was believed to have created a dish for visiting royalty. According to the story, the Italian monarch King Umberto and his consort, Queen Margherita were touring the area. In order to impress them and to show his patriotic fervor Raffaele chose to top flat bread with food that would best represent the colors of Italy: red tomato, white mozzarella cheese and green basil. The king and queen were so impressed that word quickly reached the masses.

By the beginning of the 1900's pizza made its way to cities of the United States like New York and Chicago, thanks to the Italian immigrants. Today, pizza has become just as American as baseball and apple pie.

Chicago-style pizza

Chicago-style pizza is a specific variety of pizza. True Chicago-style pizza, a unique deep dish variety, features a buttery crust, cheese and chunky tomato sauce. It is this deep-dish style that Chicago is most famous for.

The pizza begins with a simple, thin layer of dough that is laid into a deep round pan then partly baked before the toppings are added. The crust is lined with meats and/or vegetables such as Italian sausage (a Chicago staple), onions, and bell peppers under mozzarella cheese. Then a layer of seasoned crushed tomatoes goes on top and the pizza is baked until it is done.

Deep-dish pizza is usually eaten with a knife and fork, since its thick gooeyness makes a slice of pizza messy to eat with the fingers. Chicago deep-dish pizza is famous throughout the world.

California-style pizza

California-style pizza is a style of pizza arising from the California Cuisine cooking style. Wolfgang Puck popularized this style of pizza.

While most other styles of pizza are associated with different kinds of crust, the distinguishing feature of California-style pizza is the use of nontraditional toppings. For example, California-style pizza might include Thai pizza topped with bean sprouts and peanut sauce; Mexican pizza topped with carne asada, guacamole, and sour cream; Caribbean pizza topped with Jamaican jerk chicken; or chicken pizza with a white creamy garlic sauce.

California pizzas are generally smaller than the standard eight-slice pizza. Almost no California-style pizza can serve more than two or three at most, yet it costs about the same as a much larger New York-style pizza.

Unlike the other major regional pizza styles of New York, Chicago, or St. Louis, California pizza is not the dominant pizza style in the west coast.

New York-style pizza

New York-style pizza is a common style of pizza, originating from New York City. This style is known by its wide, thin, and foldable slices. The traditional toppings are tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese. It is traditionally hand-tossed and light on sauce. The slices are traditionally eaten folded in half.

The most noticeable difference between New York-style and other American pizzas is its thin and crispy hand-tossed crust. While New York pizzerias have slices with various toppings to offer, they always have cheese slices ready to go, which are typically served with oregano, dried red chili pepper, garlic powder, and grated parmesan cheese.

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