



Pizza: the soul of Italy

The origins of pizza

There are not many nations that can say their national dish is an international phenomenon. Italy has two such dishes, pasta and, of course, pizza. Pizza, in its most basic form, a **flatbread** made from flour and water, has a long history in Mediterranean cultures, including the Greek and Phoenician ones. Pizzas starts to take on a more modern look and taste in the Middle Ages when the **peasants** of the time use the few ingredients available, such as olive oil and herbs, to top it. The production of buffalo mozzarella cheese becomes a basic ingredient in the true Italian Pizza. Then in the 18th and early 19th centuries, the introduction of tomatoes to Italian cuisine finally gives us the true modern Italian pizza.

Traditional pizza varieties

The popular *Pizza Margherita* takes its name from Italy's Queen Margherita. In 1889, when she visits the Pizzeria Brandi in Naples, the pizza maker **on duty** that day, Raffaele Esposito, creates a pizza for her that contains the three colours of the new Italian flag: the red of the tomato, the white of the mozzarella and the green of fresh basil. It is a great success with the Queen, and now the rest of the world. From then on Neapolitan style pizza becomes popular all over Italy and each region has its own version that follows the Italian cooking rule of fresh, local ingredients. The Pizza Margherita remains the traditional one, but there are numerous popular varieties of pizza in Italy today. Pizzas from Pizzerias are round in shape and pizza makers cook them in a wood-fired oven. There are regional varieties such as: *Pizza Marinara*, a traditional Neapolitan pizza with oregano, anchovies and lots of garlic; *Pizza Napoli* with tomatoes, mozzarella and anchovies; *Capricciosa* with a **topping** of mushrooms, ham, artichoke hearts, olives and half a boiled egg; *Pizza Pugliese* with the local capers and olives. Pizzas from Sicily can have numerous toppings; they range from green olives, seafood, hard-boiled eggs and peas. Of course there are hundreds more to discover and all of them are delicious. Outside of Italy, there are a few *pizzaioli* who follow their homeland traditions with the ingredients they have, but it really isn't the same. In the end, once you try a real Italian pizza, other pizzas are not the same.

Glossary

flatbread: pane azzimo; **peasants**: contadini; **on duty**: di turno; **topping**: condimento

practice

- A.** Read the section "The origins of pizza" and write T (True) or F (False) at the end of the statements. Correct the false statements.

	T	F
1. A large number of nations have as many famous dishes as Italy.		
2. Italy's most famous dishes are Pizza and Pasta.		
3. The pizza has its origins in the Middle Ages.		
4. They start to use tomatoes before the introduction of buffalo mozzarella cheese.		

B. Read the section “Traditional pizza varieties” and answer the questions.

1. Where does the word Margherita come from?

.....

2. What are the basic ingredients of Pizza Margherita?

.....

3. What symbol do the ingredients create?

.....

C. Write the plural, if possible, of the following words. Are they countable or uncountable? Write the Italian equivalent. Look into the dictionary for help.

Singular	Plural (if possible)	Countable?	Uncountable?	Italian equivalent
1. Anchovy				
2. Seafood				
3. Pea				
4. Oregano				
5. Tomato				
6. Basil				
7. Dish				
8. Artichoke				
9. Garlic				
10. Flour				

D. Read the section “Traditional pizza varieties” and write the basic ingredients they use for the pizzas in the grid.

INGREDIENTS			
Pizza Capricciosa	Pizza Napoli	Pizza Marinara	Pizza Sicilia
.....			
.....			
.....			
.....			

E. Complete the sentences with the words given in the grid.

to follow • introduction • region • real • world • simple • to honour • modern • ovens •
round • varieties • success • maker • olive oil • out of

- In ancient times the basic form of pizza has very ingredients such as and herbs.
- The of tomatoes give the pizza its look.
- In 1889 the pizza Raffaele Esposito creates Pizza “Margherita” the Queen.
- The Pizza Margherita becomes a in Italy and all over the
- In pizzerias they cook pizzas in wood fired and they have a shape.
- There are many regional of pizzas, each has its own version.
- There are pizza makers Italy that try their country’s traditions.
- They do their best but you can eat the traditional pizza only in Italy.