

The History of Pizza

Pre-reading

Questions:

- What do you know about this topic?

Definitions:

- Appetizer – a small amount of food served a short time before or at the beginning of a meal
- Consume – to eat or drink a large amount



Reading

16 Pizza has been pleasing taste buds for a very long time. In prehistoric times, people baked
34 large pieces of bread on flat cooking stones. Later, in Italy, these flat pieces of bread were
52 **seasoned** with herbs and called focaccia bread. To this day, many people like to eat focaccia bread
55 as an appetizer or snack.

59 When Europeans came to the New World, they were introduced to tomatoes, which they
69 then took back to their home countries. The Italians needed something to add to their bread-filled
85 diet. The people of Naples, Italy, were the first to put tomatoes on focaccia bread. At first, people
103 were hesitant to use tomatoes. They thought this red fruit may be poisonous.

116 The world's first pizzeria, Port' Alba, opened in 1830. Pizzas were baked in an oven lined
132 with lava from a local volcano. The first pizza delivery occurred in 1889 when an Italian restaurant
149 owner was asked to create a special dish for the guest of honor, Queen Margherita Giovanni.

165 He wanted to include the colors of the Italian flag in his dish for the queen. He added
183 tomatoes (red), mozzarella cheese (white), and basil (green) to focaccia bread. He named the meal
198 the Margherita Pizza, using part of the guest of honor's name along with part of the name of the
217 restaurant – Pietro Il Pizzaiolo. The pizza was delivered to the palace because the queen did not
233 want to go all the way to the restaurant.

242 In 1905, Gennaro Lombardi opened the first pizzeria in the U.S. It still stands in New York
259 City today. Pizza did not become popular until after World War II. War veterans who had been
276 stationed in Italy returned home craving the pizza they had eaten there.

288 Soon, pre-made pizza mixes, frozen pizza, and pizzeria **chains** appeared around the country.
301 Today, pizza is one of the most popular foods in the world. Some interesting pizza facts include:

- 318 • Pizza Hut is the largest pizza company in the world.
- 328 • The world's largest pizza measured 37.4 meters in diameter. It was baked in South
342 Africa in 1990.
- 345 • Kids between the ages of 3 and 11 prefer pizza over all other foods for dinner.
- 361 • Three out of the top ten weeks of pizza consumption occur in January. More pizza is
377 consumed during Super Bowl week than any other week of the year.
- 389 • 62% of Americans prefer meat toppings on their pizza.
- 398 • Mozzarella cheese was originally made from the milk of water buffalo.

Understanding

1. What was the name of the world's first pizza place? Where was it? _____

2. What does the word **chain** mean in this reading? _____

3. What was the first fruit on pizza? _____

4. What was the precursor to pizza? _____

5. How was the first pizza created? For whom was it made? _____

6. What does the word **season** mean in this reading? _____

7. When did pizza come to the U.S.? _____

8. Which pizza fact surprised you the most? Why? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Do you like pizza?

- If yes, write about your favorite kind. Where do you get it? How often do you eat it?
What are your favorite toppings?
- If no, what don't you like about it? What Italian food, if any, do you prefer?
