

□ **READING CHALLENGE**

# The Story of Pizza

*Everybody loves pizza. But where did it come from? And who made the first one?*

<b>Level</b>	A1 — Beginner
<b>Age Group</b>	Teens (11-16)
<b>Topic</b>	Food & Daily Life
<b>Duration</b>	~10-12 minutes
<b>Skill</b>	Reading
<b>Vocabulary</b>	15 words
<b>Quiz</b>	5 questions

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Pizza. Just the word makes you hungry. A hot, round base with tomato sauce, melted cheese, and your favourite **toppings**. Pizza is one of the most **popular** foods in the world. People eat it in Italy, in Japan, in Brazil, in Turkey — everywhere. But pizza was not always the food we know today. It has a long and interesting story. Let's go back in time and find out where pizza came from.

## Bread and Toppings: The Beginning

People have been eating flat bread for thousands of years. In ancient Egypt, people made flat bread and put things on top of it. The ancient Greeks ate flat bread with oil and herbs. In Persia — modern-day Iran — soldiers cooked flat bread on their shields and put cheese on top. These were not really pizzas. They did not have tomato sauce or mozzarella. But the idea was the same: flat **dough** with food on top.

For a long **century** after century, people in many countries made flat bread with toppings. But the pizza we know today — with tomato, cheese, and a soft base — started in one place: Naples, Italy.

## Naples: The Home of Pizza

In the 1700s and 1800s, Naples was a big, busy city. Many people were poor. They needed food that was **cheap**, fast, and easy to eat. Street sellers started making flat bread with tomato sauce on top. Tomatoes came to Italy from South America in the 1500s. At first, many Europeans thought tomatoes were dangerous to eat! But people in Naples tried them and loved them.

The **bakers** in Naples put tomato sauce on flat dough and cooked it in a very hot **oven**. They **spread** the sauce on the dough and added a little cheese or oil. It was delicious. Working people in Naples ate it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They could buy a **slice** on the street and eat it with their hands. No plate, no fork, no knife. Just pizza.

## The Queen's Pizza

In 1889, something important happened. The King and Queen of Italy visited Naples. The Queen's name was Margherita. She wanted to try the famous local food. A baker called Raffaele Esposito made three different pizzas for her. The Queen's favourite pizza had three **ingredients**: tomato (red), mozzarella cheese (white), and basil leaves (green). These three colours were the same as the Italian **flag**: red, white, and green.

Esposito named this pizza "Pizza Margherita" after the Queen. It became very famous. Today, Pizza Margherita is still one of the most popular pizzas in the world. The **recipe** is the same: tomato sauce, mozzarella, basil, and olive oil. Simple and perfect.

## Pizza Goes to America

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, millions of Italians left Italy and moved to America. They went to cities like New York, Chicago, and Boston. They brought their food with them — including pizza. In 1905, a man called Gennaro Lombardi opened the first pizza restaurant in New York City. It was on Spring Street in Manhattan. You can still visit it today!

At first, only Italian immigrants ate pizza in America. Other Americans did not know what it was. But slowly, more and more people tried it. The **flavour** was amazing. The price was low. By the 1950s, pizza was everywhere in America. Pizza restaurants opened in every city. Frozen pizza appeared in supermarkets. Companies started to **deliver** pizza to people's homes. You could call a number and someone brought a hot pizza to your door. Pizza delivery became a huge business.

## Pizza Around the World

Today, pizza is a truly global food. People in almost every country eat pizza. But different countries like different toppings. In America, pepperoni is the most popular topping. In Japan, people put sweetcorn, mayonnaise, and even squid on their pizza. In Brazil, a popular pizza has green peas on it. In Sweden, some people eat pizza with banana and curry. In Turkey, a dish called pide is similar to pizza, with meat and cheese on a boat-shaped base. In India, you can find pizza with tandoori chicken. Every country makes pizza in its own way.

The numbers are amazing. People around the world eat about 5 **billion** pizzas every year. In America alone, people eat about 3 billion pizzas a year — that is about 100 acres of pizza every day! The global pizza business is worth over 150 billion dollars. Pizza is not just food. It is one of the biggest businesses in the world.

## Why Do We Love Pizza So Much?

Scientists have studied why people love pizza. The answer is simple: pizza has everything our body likes. The cheese has fat and protein. The tomato sauce has sugar and a strong taste called “umami.” The dough gives us energy. When we eat pizza, our brain feels happy. It is the perfect combination of flavours.

But pizza is more than just taste. Pizza is about sharing. You put a big pizza on the table and everyone takes a slice. You eat pizza at parties, with friends, after school, on Friday nights. Pizza is the food of good times. It brings people together.

## From Naples to Your Kitchen

The next time you eat a slice of pizza, think about its long journey. It started as flat bread in ancient Egypt. It became a cheap street food in Naples. A baker named it after a queen. Italian immigrants took it to America. And now it is everywhere. A simple idea — dough, tomato, cheese — became the most popular food on the planet.

And the best part? You can make pizza at home. You just need flour, water, tomato sauce, cheese, and an oven. Put your favourite toppings on it. Cook it for ten minutes. And enjoy.

That is the beauty of pizza. It is simple. It is delicious. And it is for everyone.

## Vocabulary

#	Word	Definition
1	<b>dough</b>	a soft, thick mix of flour and water that you use to make bread or pizza
2	<b>oven</b>	a machine that gets very hot inside; you use it to cook or bake food
3	<b>baker</b>	a person who makes bread, cakes, and other food in an oven
4	<b>slice</b>	a thin, flat piece of food cut from something bigger
5	<b>topping</b>	food that you put on top of a pizza, like cheese or tomato
6	<b>deliver</b>	to take something to a person's house or another place
7	<b>recipe</b>	a list of instructions that tells you how to cook something
8	<b>ingredient</b>	one of the things you use to make a food, like flour, cheese, or tomato
9	<b>popular</b>	liked by many people
10	<b>spread</b>	to move something so it covers a larger area; to put a thin layer on something
11	<b>cheap</b>	not expensive; you do not need a lot of money to buy it
12	<b>flavour</b>	the taste of food or drink
13	<b>flag</b>	a piece of cloth with colours or pictures that represents a country
14	<b>century</b>	a period of 100 years
15	<b>billion</b>	the number 1,000,000,000 — a thousand million

## Comprehension Quiz

1. Where did modern pizza come from?
  - A) Rome
  - B) Naples, Italy
  - C) New York, USA
  - D) Athens, Greece
  
2. Why was the Margherita pizza special?
  - A) It was the biggest pizza in the world
  - B) It was made for Queen Margherita, and the colours were like the Italian flag
  - C) It was the cheapest pizza in Naples
  - D) It was the first pizza with meat on it
  
3. How did pizza come to America?
  - A) American soldiers brought it from Italy
  - B) A French baker invented it in New York
  - C) Italian immigrants moved to America and opened pizza shops
  - D) The queen of Italy sent pizza to the American president
  
4. What did people in Naples use pizza for?
  - A) It was food for rich people at big parties
  - B) It was a cheap, fast meal for poor working people
  - C) They only ate it on special holidays
  - D) They sold it to tourists from other countries
  
5. How many pizzas do people eat every year around the world?
  - A) About 1 million
  - B) About 100 million
  - C) About 5 billion
  - D) About 50 billion

## Answer Key

#	Answer	Question
1	<b>B</b>	Where did modern pizza come from?
2	<b>B</b>	Why was the Margherita pizza special?
3	<b>C</b>	How did pizza come to America?
4	<b>B</b>	What did people in Naples use pizza for?
5	<b>C</b>	How many pizzas do people eat every year around the world?