

How to make Neapolitan pizza in... say... Newport (good luck!)



Strict rules for selling Neapolitan pizza may soon apply

The Association of Real Neapolitan Pizza (Verace Pizza Napoletana Association) was founded in 1984 to increase the value of the pizzas produced by old Neapolitan methods, against the backdrop of what it perceived as a watering-down of the product, due to the spread of fast-food chains. In 2004, Italy's authorities enshrined the rules in guidelines on how to make Neapolitan pizza. Then, on 14 February this year, the association succeeded in getting the European Union to publish the requisites for 'real Neapolitan pizza' in the EU's Official Gazette – meaning it should pass into law as an STG or Guaranteed Traditional Speciality when the six-month objection period expires this month. After that, pizzas in all European countries will have to follow the rules if they want to call products 'Neapolitan pizza'.

- Real Neapolitan pizza must be round – no more than 14" (35cm) in diameter, no thicker than 0.1" in the middle, with a crust about 0.8" thick
- The texture must be soft, elastic and easily foldable
- Only three types are allowed: Marinara, with garlic and oregano; Margherita, with basil and mozzarella cheese from the southern Apennines; and extra-Margherita, with fresh tomatoes, basil and buffalo mozzarella from Campania
- Dough should be allowed to rise for at least six hours and rolled out manually
- Pizza must be cooked in a wood-fired oven that can reach the required temperature of 485°C.

has removed the charcoal, he can bake bread. Does that mean that non-specialist outlets such as cafés or bakeries could benefit from such a powerhouse? Not this type, he says, which is for a very specialist product. "It takes lots of skill to use it and most people won't know how to use it."

Mascoli believes the humidity it emits makes it ideal for only a handful of bread products, but says it's ideally suited to Neapolitan pizza. "They would have to know how to homogenise the surface temperature or you have hot and cold spots, how to turn the pizza on its side..." he says.

What of the future? Having just launched, the entrepreneur is waiting to see how the venture does before any expansion. He also owns a private members' club in London's Soho, as well as being the proprietor of a cultural magazine. But his mighty oven promises to fuel his pizza business a little longer yet. EB

10 Steps to a 'Better for You' Pizza

Thin-crust Neapolitan pizza is now being offered in some quarters as a 'healthy option'. Who'd have thought it? A simple tomato sauce, delicately flavoured with herbs and garlic, makes a low-fat topping along with roasted vegetables, meat or fish, writes **Chris Dickinson**, NPD director of pizza base supplier La Pizza. Much has been written about the benefits of lycopene, a powerful antioxidant abundant in red tomatoes, processed tomato products and other red fruits.

- 1 Use a brown base for increased fibre
- 2 Keep sugar content to a minimum by using sauces containing no more than 1%
- 3 Keep oil and fat to a minimum; use sauces with little or none in the recipe
- 4 When oil is used, make sure it is olive oil. For additional flavour, use extra virgin olive oil. If you don't want the olive flavour, use 'extra light' olive oil
- 5 Choose a thin-crust pizza. For dough portions, use a 7oz dough ball for a 10" pizza, 10oz for a 12" pizza, 14oz for a 14" pizza and 18oz for a 16" pizza. Of course, these are just guidelines – it is possible to have a slightly thicker crust and still have a healthy pizza but, generally speaking, the thinner the better
- 6 Use only the best tomato sauce for great flavour – you will use less!
- 7 Use a 50:50 blend of no or low-fat mozzarella and regular mozzarella
- 8 Don't overdo the cheese. Use no more than 6oz for a 10" pizza, 8oz for a 12" pizza, 11oz for a 14" pizza and 14oz for a 16" pizza
- 9 For meat toppings, use only lean meats such as lean ham, chicken and lean ground beef. Pepperoni and salami are favourites, so if you do use them, use thinly sliced and put on only a light or moderate amount
- 10 For vegetarian toppings, include as much or as little of the typical non-starchy pizza vegetables as the customer requests; tomatoes, mushrooms, onions, and green peppers all qualify.