

Pizza, in its most basic form of flat baked bread, can be traced back as far as 7,000 years ago on Sardinia, though it is believed that bread was leavened. The ancient Greeks took this to a new level and started adding various flavorings such as herbs, onion and garlic. Different manifestations of this baked flat bread are found all over the European continent as far north as Scandinavia in Finland (Rieska) and as far east as the Indian subcontinent (Naan). Pita (Greece,) Piadina (Romagna region of Italy,) Paratha (India) and even Quiche are all early manifestations of what we have come today to call pizza.

In the 16th century C.E. after contact with the Americas and the import of tomatoes to Europe, the earlier forms of what is the closest relative of today's pizza emerged in Naples. This, then called a gallette, was the emergence of modern pizza. This was originally sold in the streets and considered a poor man's pizza. In the mid 19th century, various types of toppings started filtering into the mix such as cheese, meat and fish. At the end of the 19th century, it is said in order to honor the Queen Consort, Margherita of Savoy, that Neapolitan pizza maker (pizzaiolo) Raffaele Esposito created Pizza Margherita topped with tomatoes, mozzarella and basil in order to represent the colors of the Italian flag.

Around that same time pizza started to make its emergence in the United States. From Chicago to Saint Louis to New York and Philadelphia, pizza was pervading the nation. Pizza makers roamed the streets with tin tubs of pizza selling it by the slice ("two cents a chew") since many of the poor immigrants who were attracted to this food couldn't afford the entire pie.

During the early and middle 20th century a few notable Pizza Pioneer families rose to the top of pizza fame opening spearhead pizzerias throughout the country, but it was World War II and the return of soldiers stationed in Italy that really brought pizza to the forefront of American cuisines. While stationed in various parts of Italy soldiers were always on the lookout for an expensive but tasty cuisine and were therefore became very enamored of pizza. On their return to the US, their desire for pizza fueled the growth of the American pizza industry which today is worth billions of dollars.

Frozen pizza, fast food style pizza and pizzeria restaurants sprouted throughout the United States and pizza remains today a staple of the American diet. While pre-made pizza is delicious in a pinch, nothing could possibly replace the taste of freshly baked pizza from a wood-fired brick oven...enter Artisan Caterers.