

The Pizza Slide

by Shirley Keebler

If you've ever eaten pizza, chances are you've bitten into a slice and had all those wonderful toppings slide right off and dangle against your chin: the pizza slide. It makes you look foolish—but you might be amazed to hear that the ancients never had this problem. Why not? Because the first pizzas had no toppings at all.

The people who ate the ancestors of our pizza lived in a Greek colony in the southern part of Italy more than two thousand years ago. What they enjoyed was a round, flat bread with seasonings baked into it. Only slowly did this dish evolve into the juicy pizza that we now know and love.

The first major development came around 1520, when a new fruit arrived in Italy from South America—tomatoes. Most Europeans wouldn't eat them, but the poor people of Naples added them to their pizza dough.

Although tasty, the dish remained only peasant fare until 1889, when a Neapolitan named Rafaele Esposito baked a pizza for Italy's Queen Margherita. Wanting to make the dish extra special, he added something new—mozzarella cheese. Esposito's pizza crust was also topped with tomatoes and basil leaves to represent the three colors of the Italian flag, red, white, and green. The queen loved it, and this new creation was named after her, *Pizza Margherita*.

Pizza now had a royal name, but it was still a street food in Naples, consumed mostly by the common people. It was a simple meal, cheaply made and sold for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. As it became more popular, stalls were set up and customers could order pizza cooked the way they liked it. Bakers soon added tables and

chairs so people could sit and talk while they ate. Gradually, these stalls became the pizza parlors that we know today.

But the pizzeria still had to cross the Atlantic. At the turn of the century, a great many Italians emigrated to the United States, and in 1905 one of them, Gennaro Lombardi, opened a bakery in New York City. Besides bread, he sold groceries and hot pizza—the first pizza in America.

Pizzerias soon opened all along the upper East Coast, but pizza still wasn't very popular—not until the 1940s and the end of World War II. Many American soldiers had fought in Italy during the war. There they'd found all kinds of wonderful foods. When the war ended, these men came home with a taste for pizza, and they helped spread its popularity.

As the pizza trend moved across the country, the dish became more American and less Italian. In 1943, the first pan pizza was cooked. It was popular in the Midwest and came to be known as *Chicago-style*. Built for the big American appetite, this deep-dish pizza is a thick pie loaded with toppings. *New York-style* pizza, with the traditional Neapolitan thin crust, remains popular on the East Coast. A third type, born in the Los Angeles area and called *West Coast-style*, has a light crust and high-quality toppings like sun-dried Italian tomatoes.

Pizza has become a food enjoyed around the world, eaten in restaurants and at home. It has adapted to suit many different needs and desires, and it will be fun to see what this famous dish will be like in the future. Who knows? There may even be an answer to the troublesome pizza slide.

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1. What is “the pizza slide”?
 - A when new toppings are put on pizza
 - B a place where pizza is made
 - C when toppings fall off the pizza
 - D the name of a famous restaurant

2. Paragraph 2 says, “Only slowly did this dish evolve into the juicy pizza that we now know and love.” What does the word *evolve* mean?
 - A change
 - B cook
 - C flatten
 - D shape

3. How did the introduction of tomatoes around 1520 change pizza?
 - A The price of pizza increased.
 - B Fewer people ate pizza.
 - C A new flavor was added to pizza.
 - D Pizza became a royal dish.

4. Why was cheese first introduced as a pizza topping?
 - A to make pizza more expensive
 - B to make pizza more spicy
 - C to make pizza more chewy
 - D to make pizza more tasty

5. Based on the information in the selection, which statement about the earliest form of pizza is true?
 - A The earliest pizza was like spicy, flat bread.
 - B The earliest pizza had only tomato and cheese toppings.
 - C The earliest pizza was very thick and used meat toppings.
 - D The earliest pizza was like a cheese sandwich.

6. In paragraph 8, the selection says that pizza became “more American and less Italian.” What does that description mean?
- A More Americans than Italians ate pizza.
 - B Pizza was changed to suit American tastes.
 - C More Italians moved to the United States.
 - D Pizza became popular throughout America.

7. Who first introduced pizza to the United States?
- A Greek people who lived in the South
 - B an Italian who lived in New York
 - C American soldiers after World War II
 - D a chef who worked in Chicago

8. Based on the information in this selection, what does the author **probably** think will happen to pizza in the future?
- A She thinks people will continue to enjoy it although it may change.
 - B She thinks chefs may make pizzas that are all the same.
 - C She thinks people will begin to like the ancient, flat-bread style of pizza.
 - D She thinks chefs may develop more pizzas that look like flags.

End of Set

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EOG Grade 4 Reading Sample Items

Selection Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
The Pizza Slide	1	C	Knowledge	2.06
The Pizza Slide	2	A	Generating	1.03
The Pizza Slide	3	C	Analyzing	2.05
The Pizza Slide	4	D	Generating	2.05
The Pizza Slide	5	A	Analyzing	2.05
The Pizza Slide	6	B	Analyzing	2.01
The Pizza Slide	7	B	Knowledge	2.04
The Pizza Slide	8	A	Analyzing	3.01