

# foodService

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# Pizza & Pasta: A Global Culinary and Cultural Staple

Pasta and pizza are the world's favorite fast food today. Even in India, we eat it everywhere – at home, in restaurants, on street corners. How did these dishes – so closely associated with Italy – become a staple of so many tables around the globe? The reason pasta and pizza have been so successful is because people like it in terms of them being a cultural phenomenon and not an industrial phenomenon.

by Sanjay Kumar





Italian food is world's most popular, according to a global survey of the world's favorite foods. An international YouGov study asked more than 25,000 people across 24 countries which of 34 national cuisines they had tried and whether they liked or disliked them. The figures revealed that pizza and pasta were among some of the most popular dishes in the world, with Italian cuisine receiving an average popularity score of 84 per cent across all the countries surveyed. Considering pizza and pasta exist in the realm of Italian food fare, it's not hard to imagine this as a conclusion. The market research firm found that 99 percent of Italians love Italian food, and over 90 percent of Spaniards, French, Swedes, and Brits favored Italian food above any other foreign cuisine. Italian cuisine received an average popularity score of 84 per cent across the 24 nations studied.

How did pasta and pizza – dishes so closely associated with Italy – become a staple of so many tables around the globe? Global sales figures reflect the world's love affair with pasta and pizza. According to market intelligence agency Euromonitor, the world pizza market is estimated to reach \$144.68 billion this year with the US as the largest pizza market at \$45.73 billion.

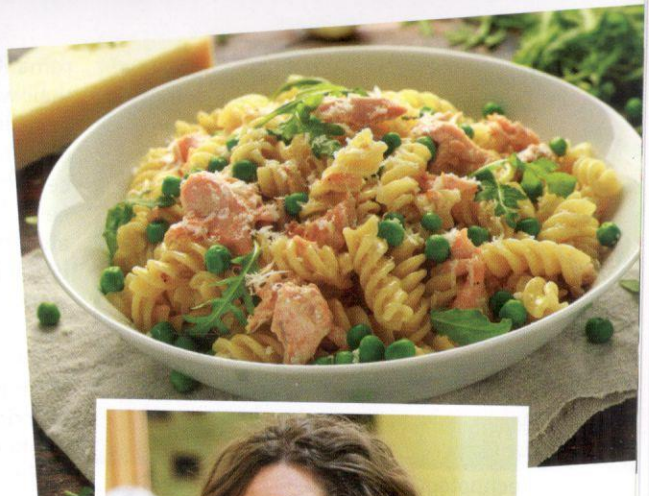
According to a research by MARC Group, the global pasta market is forecast to reach a value of over 14 billion dollars by 2023. Europe remains the largest region in the world for consumption of pasta, accounting for nearly 50% of the total consumption, the research firm said.

Another market research agency, Statista predicts the pasta market volume worth US\$20,664 million in 2019, with maximum revenue from China at US\$20,664 million. Worldwide, pasta sales have trended upwards since 2016 with Google searches for "pasta" climbing

since 2015. Pizza is trending too, with a CAGR of 1.6% through 2020 in Europe and an estimated 1 in 8 Americans eating pizza each day. Other Italian foods, such as olive oil, mozzarella and sun-dried tomatoes, never lost their appeal, with the popularity of the Mediterranean diet and Italian flavors providing testament to that.

As a result of their universal popularity, pasta and pizza are the world's favorite fast food today. Even in India, we eat it everywhere – at home, in restaurants, on street corners. According to a survey, some 47 million diners visited an Italian restaurant in 2017 for trying dishes like pasta and pizza and other new dishes. From being an unfamiliar food segment in our industry until a couple of decades ago, Italian food today has a marked presence in the market. "If you look back more even two decades ago, both pizza and pasta have had humble beginnings in India with margarita and capsicum cheese pizza in vegetarian and chicken cheese pizza in non-vegetarian being the only options available until many years later. But because they appealed to the masses, these fewer options didn't matter to people and pizza and pasta became people's favorite," says **Ishijot Surri, Executive Chef of Miniya-Turk**, a Turkish & Italian restaurant in Mumbai.

Earlier, people in India were just familiar about the native pizza and pasta flavors and tastes. But with globalization in the food industry, things changed drastically: Italian food products are now a popular segment towards which people are really inclined and Italian has become the second favorite International cuisine in the country. "Today, the options are countless with people open to experimentation. While an eggplant or pineapple pizza might be



a hit in native Italy, one wouldn't have understood the taste that it brings out when combined with cheese had the modern customer not gone ahead and experimented with the taste buds. The MNCs first introduced pizza and pasta in the country, but local companies soon jumped on the bandwagon seeing the popularity and, ever since, in addition to MNCs, more local players are also successfully present in this particular food segment," avers Surri.

Localized variations have helped to expand the likability horizon of pizza and pasta and hence they are patronized across age groups. These dishes also

*Bringing the authentic Italian products to your kitchen*



**GOLDEN CROWN**





Once regarded as calory-heavy and shorn of healthy benefits, pizza and pasta are increasingly having a healthy makeover. "Pizza and pasta are also a great source of nutrients and provide a good source of daily intake of proteins, i.e., fat, saturated fat, fibre, calcium and lycopene; however, this is an aspect that we have to educate the older generation," says **Chef Vishal Atreya, Managing Partner, The Pump House, Bengaluru**. Such health-related initiatives by the foodservice industry are spurring the growth of pasta and pizza sales. The initiatives are also thanks to the fact that consumers have intuited that pizza and pasta dishes can be part of a healthy diet. One way people are doing so is by opting to eat a range of healthy ingredients — from olive oil to whole grain pasta and sun-ripened produce.

Although people have been attracted to the taste of Italian cuisine for centuries, they're now recognizing it for its health benefits, too. "At Indore Marriott, thin crust pizzas are the highest selling with a huge demand because these are not available at most places and are usually freshly baked. Also calzone pizzas are gaining popularity these days as they can load in a huge amount of stuffing and have been newly introduced to the Indian food market. As far as pasta is concerned, penne, fusilli, farfalle and spaghetti are always in high demand. Apart from these, other types of stuffed pastas have also gained popularity. Ravioli, agnolotti, and capeleti have also been seeing an enormous popularity," notes Chanda.

People have become experimental and the young generation believes in making pizza and pasta a comfort food, which is resulting in more visits to such restaurants. This trend is prompting more innovation and new trends to enter the menus to serve the regular and

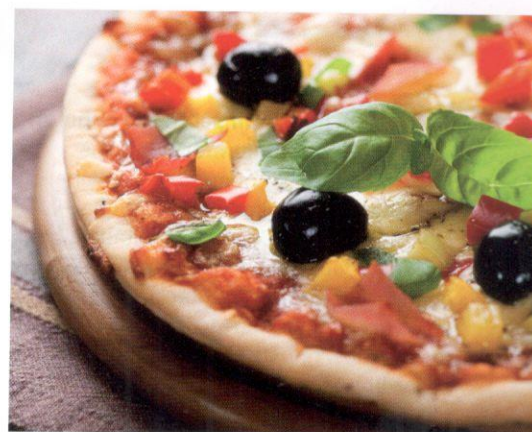
repeat clients. Italian cuisine in India is now more varied than being about just a plain cheese pizza or pasta and this trend is visible more often on the menus. Innovative pastas such as Ametriciana and homemade stuffed Olivetti can be seen on the menu. Pizzas such as calzone, meatball pizzas have also found popularity with Indian customers.

Put simply, the popularity of Italian food and that of pasta and pizza comes down to taste and nutrition. Though good on their own, it's the way the ingredients in Italian dishes are combined that really sets the food apart. "Balanced", "light", "fresh" and "simple" are all commonly used to describe Italian cuisine mainly because the ingredients and preparation methods are minimal, time-tested and designed to showcase natural flavors.

#### How Brands and Manufacturers Can Drive the Pizza-Pasta Market

Whether cooking pizza and pasta at home or ordering off a menu, consumers like that they can easily recognize exactly what they're eating. Food brands and manufacturers can appeal to this desire for simple foods by shortening ingredient lists and cleaning up labels, including through the use of clean label preservation. This may include the addition of top-quality ingredients — something that could earn a front- or back-of-pack callout — as well as the use of natural flavors to produce an authentic savory taste.

Ingredients that supply good taste to Italian cuisine are often packed with vitamins and nutrients. Olive oil was perhaps the first healthy fat recognized



by consumers, and the large quantities of fresh produce that go into sauces and spreads can make even indulgent items healthy. Aligning with the consumer trend of "eating the rainbow" as a way of guaranteeing good nutrition, many Italian dishes are now multicolored, owing to the range of fresh, minimally processed ingredients. Going ahead, one thing that's for sure is: Consumers will continue to seek out such ingredients in the name of good health.

Brands and manufacturers can also enhance brand recognition by adding positive claims on front of pack that include the name of ingredients positively related to health, such as olive oil. Attributes such as "simple", "fresh" and "natural" can be emphasized to showcase the nutrition of the diet. There may be increased consumer appeal in products that are formulated to include fewer ingredients viewed as unhealthy and more ingredients perceived as being more healthy, such as organic and non-GMO offerings.

**In the pages ahead, we share with you the thoughts and views of leading chefs, restaurateurs, and F&B professionals across the country on the growing popularity and scope of innovation in pizza and pasta for the foodservice sector.**



**Bringing the world ingredients to your kitchen**




















to the toppings, there is a need for that extra spiciness. Using a lot of seasoning made of dry herbs like oregano, rosemary, basil, mixed with red chillies, garlic and salt act as taste enhancers and provide additional flavor.

#### Evolution of pizza and pasta over time:

If you see more than two decades back, both pizza and pasta have had humble beginnings in India with margarita and capsicum cheese pizza in vegetarian and chicken cheese pizza in non-vegetarian being the only options for a good few years. But because it appealed to the masses, the fewer options didn't matter to people and pizza became people's favorite. Today, the options are countless with people open to experimentation. While an eggplant or pineapple pizza might be a hit in native Italy, one wouldn't have understood the taste that it brings out when combined with cheese had the modern customer not gone ahead and experimented with our taste buds.

While MNCs first introduced pizza and pasta in the country, the local companies also soon jumped on the bandwagon seeing the popularity and, ever since, in addition to MNCs, more local players are also successfully present in this particular food segment.

So, over time, the good old pizza has undergone an evolution of sorts. Menus have expanded, varying sizes have emerged, toppings have got indigenized and, most importantly, the industry

has started catering to the affordable segment. Promos have started screaming "starting from Rs.49 only", "Meal Combo offer", "Friday frenzy with buy-one-get-one-free offer", etc. Meanwhile, the humble pasta has taken a more classy route in reaching out to the masses of India, primarily becoming a darling in the midst of a fine dine a-la-carte order.

#### Cuisine innovations in pizza and pasta:

Some of the cuisine innovations that have been done globally include mug pizza, meat-burst crust pizza, fried pizza, using edible gold on pizza, the pizza box pizza in which even the pizza box is made of pizza, the chocolate egg pizza, the taco pizza, etc. In pasta, there is the pasta cake that is a huge hit. A casserole made of pepperoni pizza (combination of pizza and pasta), fried lasagna, white chocolate flavored Mac and cheese, avocado pasta, fried spaghetti, fried egg with ravioli, and a combination of enchilada and Chinese noodles are other innovations that have been loved by people.

Keeping in mind the local tastes and preferences, there are possible innovations that can be put into play with pizza and pasta. While there are some who like the bland basic tomato cheese or tomato cheese and meatball pizza as is available in Naples, there are others who want that desi touch to the pizza. Kabab and paneer pizza, Chettinad pizza to touch the south Indian palate, oats pizza, mini bite pizza, uttapam pizza, pizza crackers, paneer chilli pizza, etc. are popular pizza innovations. In pasta, there is the masala pasta that is made almost like any Indian dish. While Indians are open to global food, we like our food with the spices and incorporating the same in pizza and pasta is always a hit formula.

#### Examples of cuisine innovations in

**other fast foods:** Most Indian fast foods are amenable to cuisine innovation. Such examples include Chinese dosa, cheese



**Localized variations of pizza and pasta, which are customized according to Indian tastes like paneer tikka pizza, chicken tikka pizza, malai boti pizza, Chettinad pizza or makhani pasta, have helped to expand the likability horizon of these dishes.**

– Chef Ishijot Surri  
Executive Chef,  
Miniya-Turk, a Turkish & Italian  
Restaurant in Mumbai

dosa, Italian pay bhaji, Italian noodles, pani puri shots, paneer shashlik sizzlers, veg Manchurian Frankie, chocolate bread roll, etc.

**Fast food concepts you like most:** One must not forget that pizza companies were the true pioneers in food delivery in India and have set the gold standard on that front. They have shown to the world that it's not enough only to make delicious food, but the value is added when it is served on time. Like mentioned above, pizza pasta concepts are doing very good with the latest trends being the adoption of global flavors that have not yet been tasted, and Indianizing those flavors.

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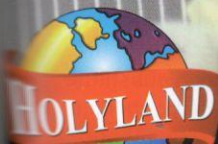
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## \\ FRESH ITALIAN HAND-STRETCHED PIZZAS ARE A HIT WITH MILLENNIALS \\

**Popularity of pizza and pasta with consumers:** These dishes have been an integral part of Italian and European cuisine with roots stretching to antiquity. Their development and evolution has taken place over centuries of social and economic changes in step with the culture and social mores of the times. It explains their continuing popularity through the ages. In the modern context, and with reference to India especially, their exploding popularity is largely due to the fact that food journalism has picked up substantially and the food blogging industry has also become big. Also, the fact that promoting the dishes of a restaurant has today become much simpler with the advancement of technology, together with the increased presence of food aggregators and the widespread reach of social media. All these factors are contributing to the popularity of pizza and pasta besides aiding to the development of food concepts.

**Most popular pizza/pasta offerings at your outlet:** As an all-day cocktail bar, and located in one of the poshest areas of Delhi-NCR – Aerocity – Liv Bar is visited by high-end corporate customers to travellers, expats, foreigners and gourmands who love authentic food. Being an authentic Italian and European bar, we serve our well-travelled and educated clientele authentic Italian and European cuisine along with live cocktails and live music. Easy to digest and relish, our pizza and pasta offerings can also be eaten happily by older generations as our menu is a kind

that serves simple yet flavorful food with only 2-4 main ingredients.

We are known for our one-of-its-kind hand-stretched pizzas. Called Liv Super, they come loaded with the goodness of greens – broccoli, spinach, sundried tomatoes, garlic and lemon – along with classic spicy pepperoni, Chipotle chicken, truffle porcini mushroom and rocket leaves. While these are some of our favorite pizzas, the signature pastas at Liv Bar include spaghetti lamb bolognese, fusilli mushroom with white sauce, and prawn linguini.

**Making pizza and pasta offerings more exciting:** We are a make-your-own cocktail bar and offer authentic pizza and pasta and other Italian and European cuisine with live cocktails and live music. Our strategy at Liv is to make food as authentic and exciting as we can. From

using fresh dough to serving straight from the oven,

we make our own fresh Italian hand stretched pizzas. Similarly, our gourmet hand-crafted burgers are served with exciting condiments – from green pea salad to creamy corn, spicy mayo and skinny potato chips. Our pastas are authentic European, which range from gnocchi to linguine, lamb bolognese, and more.

**Popular innovations in your pizza/pasta preparations:** Our menu is a selection of interesting and innovative European and Italian dishes. However, few innovations have been as popular as our Chipotle chicken on a fresh hand-stretched pizza. Another innovation is our pepperoni



**Easy to digest and relish, our pizza and pasta offerings can also be eaten happily by the older generations as our menu serves simple yet flavorful food with only 2-4 main ingredients.**

– Umang Tewari  
Founder, Liv Bar, Delhi

pizza with a spicy twist. Guests also love our hand-crafted gourmet crispy fish and southern fried chicken stuffed in a choice of handcrafted organic buns in black, red and classic bun.

**Most suitable eating occasion for pizza and pasta:** Being an all-day live cocktail bar, we serve pizza, pasta and burger throughout the day. However, the maximum number of these dishes are sold for dinners and over the weekends.

**Pizza/pasta as a snacking option versus full meal option:** Pizza and pasta at Liv Bar are a complete experience and a full meal in itself. With our focus on the quality of ingredients along with their meal value, we try to give the best to our diners.

*One stop provider for all Commercial Kitchen ingredients*





## \\\\ PASTA AND PIZZA FLAVORS ARE CRAFTED TO SUIT ALL PALATES \\\\

**Pizza and pasta offerings at your outlet:** Romeo Lane serves a wide array of scrumptious delicacies – pizza, burger and pasta – with a twist. Our offerings include concept burgers and pastas like homemade ravioli, spaghetti aglio e olio pasta, Alfredo, to pizzas led by zucchini, corn and arugula, shrimp scampi, sausage n mushroom, and more.

### Ways to make your pizza, pasta and other fast food offerings more exciting:

Being a world cuisine lounge, we offer an alluring range of pizza, burger, and pasta. Our fast food offerings are not only toothsome but are also very inviting. Our chefs have incorporated the best of the flavors, giving a taste of the cuisine without compromising on pizza and burger cravings. Our pizzas come loaded with different toppings and with cheese.

### Customer profile at your outlet for pizza, pasta and other fast offerings:

As an all-day comfort food lounge and cafe, we cater to gourmands who love innovation with the finest of quality food. With our range of offerings in pizza, pasta, and burger, we attract all kinds of foodies. From serving to groups of friends to families or couples, our pizza and pasta offerings are an all-time favorite amongst all guests.

### Making pizza and pasta offerings more desirable for the older generations:

Food at Romeo Lane is crafted keeping the balance of flavors to cater to all palates. Older generations love eating healthy, fresh and delicious food and, at Romeo Lane, we prepare it all fresh. Our burgers contain healthy protein and toppings that come with an exciting twist. The pizzas at Romeo Lane suit everyone's palate and are a good choice for the older generations.

### Most popular pizza and pasta offerings at your outlet:

The paneer tikka and tandoori veggies are the signature pizzas at Romeo Lane. Other popular pizzas include quattro formaggi with herbed mushroom; meat lovers' pizza loaded with chicken tikka, buffalo chicken, Turkish chicken, and those with assorted veggies and fresh mozzarella. Arabian pizza and grilled zucchini with corn and arugula are also a big hit here.

### Most impactful and popular innovations in pizza and pasta:

With ingredients marrying the American burgers and Italian crusts, we have innovated with many new combinations – from a BBQ cottage cheese and grilled asparagus veg pizza to a shrimp scampi with garlic and basil cream. More examples of innovations include Arabian pizza along with pastas like keema rogan josh pasta, home-made ravioli with chicken grain mustard and spinach.

### Evolution of pizza and pasta offerings over time:

From authentic Italian pizzas with fresh tomatoes, basil and cheese to the fusion versions from Indian to Chinese, Mexican and more, pizza adapts to any shape, flavor and taste easily. Our pizzas are creations and adaptations of different cuisines as we use thin crusts to make pizza using ingredients from asparagus to arugula, zucchini, broccoli with cheeses of different kinds – from cheddar to ricotta, bocconcini and more.

### Most suitable eating occasion for pizza/ pasta:

Being more of an evening delicacy, the maximum request for pizza and pasta is during the evening at Romeo Lane. However, the two dishes are a meal in itself and we receive decent orders throughout the day.



**Our offerings include concept burgers and pastas like homemade ravioli, spaghetti aglio e olio pasta, Alfredo, to pizzas led by zucchini, corn and arugula, shrimp scampi, sausage n mushroom, and more.**

– Saurabh Luthra  
Founder, Romeo Lane, Delhi



**Pizza/pasta as a full meal option:** Pizzas at Romeo Lane are wholesome, delicious and a meal in itself. From using fresh and authentic ingredients to serving good quantity portions of healthy pizza, we try to make them as fulfilling as possible. We use nutritious toppings with good sources of proteins.



## Essential ingredients for all commercial bakeries

