

The Pizza Style Handbook

Twenty classic pizza types - from Naples to New York - with origins and typical composition. A free, plain-English reference compiled for readers of PizzaUSAIItaly.info.

Prepared and reviewed by Destiny Wilkerson | October 2026

Every pizza, whatever name it carries, is assembled from the same four building blocks. What readers call a "style" is simply a different answer to four questions: how thick the dough is baked, which sauce covers it, which cheese goes on top, and which toppings finish the pie. The Italian tradition prizes thin crusts and one or two toppings; the American one answers with taller pans, wider slices and richer combinations. Both traditions appear in the table on page 2.

The four building blocks

Dough and crust	wheat flour, water, yeast, salt - occasionally oil or butter; thickness is the clearest style marker.
Sauce	most often crushed or strained tomato; white pizzas replace it with olive oil or cream.
Cheese	low-moisture mozzarella is the everyday standard; provolone, cheddar, parmesan and gorgonzola define particular styles.
Toppings	meats, vegetables and herbs - restrained in the Italian canon, generous in the American one.

Turn the page for the complete style table: twenty pies, region by region, with the typical composition of each. Ingredient lists describe common culinary usage - individual recipes naturally vary.

The Twenty Styles at a Glance

#	Style	Origin / Tradition	Typical composition
1	Margherita	Naples, Italy	thin dough, tomato, fresh mozzarella, basil, olive oil
2	Neapolitan	Naples, Italy	hydrated dough, crushed tomato, fior di latte, olive oil, salt
3	Marinara	Naples, Italy	thin dough, tomato, garlic, oregano, olive oil; no cheese
4	Classic Italian	Italy, everyday style	thin crust, tomato or oil base, mozzarella, 1-2 toppings
5	Roman	Rome, Italy	oiled thin crust, tomato, mozzarella, anchovies or oregano
6	Sicilian	Sicily, Italy	tall airy dough, tomato, cheese, onions, breadcrumbs
7	New York	New York, USA	high-gluten dough, tomato sauce, low-moisture mozzarella,
8	Chicago Deep Dish	Chicago, USA	buttery tall crust, mozzarella, chunky tomato sauce, sausage
9	Chicago Thin (Tavern)	Chicago, USA	cracker-thin crust, tomato sauce, mozzarella, fennel sausage
10	California	California, USA	light crust, olive oil or light sauce, goat cheese, seasonal
11	Texas	Texas, USA	cornmeal crust, barbecue sauce, smoked brisket, cheddar,
12	Detroit	Detroit, USA	rectangular dough, brick cheese, striped tomato sauce,
13	St. Louis	St. Louis, USA	unleavened crust, Provel cheese, oregano tomato sauce,
14	Pepperoni	American favorite	hand-tossed dough, tomato sauce, mozzarella, pepperoni
15	Meat Lovers	American favorite	sturdy dough, tomato sauce, mozzarella, pepperoni, sausage,
16	BBQ Chicken	American favorite	crust, barbecue sauce, grilled chicken, gouda, red onion
17	Buffalo Chicken	American favorite	crust, buffalo sauce, chicken, mozzarella, blue cheese or
18	Hawaiian	Fusion favorite	crust, tomato sauce, mozzarella, ham, pineapple
19	Four Cheese	Italian classic	crust, mozzarella, gorgonzola, parmesan, fontina, olive oil
20	Veggie Garden	Everyday favorite	crust, tomato or pesto base, mozzarella, peppers, mushrooms, olives

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