

LIFE

# These are the 13 best pizza places in America's top pizza cities

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Pizza City USA

Pepperoni at Pat's Pizza and Ristorante in Chicago

Pizza isn't just fun and delicious; it's a multibillion-dollar economy.

**According** to PMQ Pizza Magazine, the U.S. pizza market is a \$44 billion industry and consumer demand is **on the rise**.

Three cities, Chicago, New York City and Los Angeles, are consistently considered among the best pizza cities in the U.S., top ranked by the likes of **The Daily Meal**, **Travel + Leisure** and **Tasting Table**.

**CNBC Make It** spoke to a pizza expert in each city to find the best pizza in America's top pizza locales.

# Chicago



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Steve Dolinsky with diners at Bebu

Chicago is the best pizza city in America, **according** to TripAdvisor. Pizza history goes as far back as the early 1900s with immigrants coming in from Europe. It wasn't until 1943 when deep-dish pizza was **invented**, and Chicago has been known for it since.

Visitors can take pizza tours, including those with pizza expert Steve Dolinsky, host of ABC 7 Chicago's "The Hungry Hound," a 13-time James Beard Award-winning food reporter and author of "Pizza City USA: 101 Reasons Why Chicago is America's Greatest Pizza Town." **Dolinsky** tells **CNBC Make It** there are around 9,000 pizza places in Chicago, but these three top the list.

## Pat's Pizza and Ristorante

"Pat's has been around since 1950. It is an institution," says Dolinsky, and unlike some Chicago joints, the pizza here is loved for its thin crust. "You can tell immediately how thin it is. Almost caramelized on the edge, the pizza is nicely browned.

"You can actually hear when you bite into the crust," says Dolinsky, describing its perfect crunchiness.

"It's not a slice joint, it's a classic Chicago-style tavern, so it's square cut (a.k.a., 'party cut')," he says.

And since it's located in the Lake View neighborhood of the city, there are not long lines. "Only locals really know about Pat's," says Dolinsky.

A build-it-yourself whole pizza starts at \$13.25.

### **Pizzeria Bebu**

**Pizzeria Bebu** doesn't look like much from the outside. The year-old restaurant is tucked into a long, narrow room at the base of a micro-apartment building with floor-to-ceiling windows in Lincoln Park. But owner Zach Smith is trying to change your idea of what a pizza joint should be, according to Dolinsky. There are wines by the bottle (from \$30 to \$200) and the pizza is "artisan."

"An artisan pie is typically made by a chef with more experience than just slinging average pies that were run through a sheeter," says Dolinsky. "These doughs are composed of a blend of flours and ... have a higher moisture content, which allows for steaming inside the dough and the creation of more air pockets, which result in better chew and texture....The toppings are always sourced meticulously or made in-house. Bebu makes all of their sausage and meatballs for their pizzas in-house," he says.



Pizza City USA

A slice at Bebu in Chicago

Despite the fancy pizza-making, Dolinsky says the service is casual and "chill."

Whole pies start at \$18. The Pepperoni pizza with parmesan, mozzarella, garlic, calabrian chile and basil is \$19.

## Dante's

Dante's has a "grungy" attitude, says Dolinsky, with rock and roll music playing (often metal). All of the pies are "Dante's Inferno"-themed, like the Virgil pie (black olive, green olive, salami and fresh mozzarella), named after Dante's guide through through hell, and a 9 Levels of Hell pie, with chilies, meats, peppers and more. You can get 20-inch specialty pies, but the real attraction are the gigantic, "Fred Flinstone-sized slices," says Dolinsky. "We are not a slice culture, but we have some places making excellent slices."

Despite the in-your-face feel of the place, Dante's doesn't neglect the details. The crust of the pizza is brushed with garlic butter and sprinkled with parmesan, reggiano and oregano, "so you get a bonus breadstick-like flavor in your final few bites," says Dolinsky. "No one else in Chicago does this."

Slices start at \$3.50.

## Labriola

"Sit at a table during lunch on any given day, and I'll bet 80 percent of the tables are ordering a deep-dish pie," says Dolinsky of [Labriola](#).

"Generous, chunky icebergs of fresh tomato lightly seasoned with fresh herbs grace the pizza; juicy, jagged-edged pieces of sausage (seasoned with a bit of Calabrian chile from Calabria, Italy) nestle within melted mozzarella," says Dolinsky describing the pie. "And the best surprise of all, the dough is firm to the touch and crispy all the way around. A perfect ratio!"

The chefs here have cracked the code here, according to Dolinsky: "They offer deep-dish pizza that both tourists and picky locals like me actually crave."

Depending on time of day, there can be lines. A 12-inch deep-dish pie is between \$21.25 and \$30.25. The signature Danny's Special, with tomato, mozzarella, sausage, mushroom, green pepper and onions, is \$28.25.