

# NATIONAL PIZZA WEEK



20<sup>TH</sup> – 26<sup>TH</sup> NOV

## THIS IS OFFICIALLY BRITAIN'S BEST PIZZA

Britain's best slice is shared ahead of National Pizza Week – and here's how to make it!

The world of pizza has now got a new 'best' ahead of [National Pizza Week](#). A practically perfect pizza featuring a homemade vegan cheese sauce, vegan cheese and panko breadcrumbs has been awarded the official title of Britain's best pizza in 2023.



A panel of industry experts, including celebrity chef Theo Randall, Marco Fuso, MFP Consultancy; Michael Eyre, product director at Jestic; Michele Pascarella, Napoli on the Road and Thom Elliot, co-founder of renowned Pizza Pilgrims restaurants taste-tested some of the UK's finest and most innovative pizzas at the Pizza Chef of the Year, part of the Pizza, Pasta & Italian Food Industry Awards.

Named "The Return of the M.A.C", the pizza that wowed the judges with its plant-based creativity was created by Brigi Stamber, the pizza chef from Pizzaface, Brighton. The pizza was inspired by the ultimate comfort food – macaroni cheese.

Talking of the accolade, Brigi said: "I am totally overwhelmed. I am still shocked that I have created the best pizza in Britain!

"I feel like my passion comes out in the food I create. Making pizza is like making art. It allows you to express yourself and make a change in the food industry. Everything on the day of the competition went to plan, and I was so happy with what I created.

“The pizza industry is full of life and brimming with transformative ideas. It’s been another tough year for everyone involved in making, creating, designing and owning pizza eateries. So, I stand here today extremely proud of myself!”

The overall winning pizza also helped Brigi claim the plaudits in the Whitworth Bros. Flour “Chef’s Special” category. As if that wasn’t enough, Brigi also took home another win, being named the top pizza chef in the Dawn Farms Sustainable Topping category for her “Clucky Bird” pizza, made using Dawn Farms Plant Deli Roast Chick’n Strips.

Organised by the Pizza, Pasta & Italian Food Association (PAPA), the competition invites pizza professionals from across the country to enter. Finalists went head-to-head live, all under the watchful eyes of the expert judging panel. Winners were revealed by Theo Randall and comedian Adam Bloom during a gala evening at the Royal Lancaster, London.

“Every year, I can’t wait to see what pizzas are placed before me. The entries were unbelievable,” said Theo Randall, one of the esteemed judges.

“I was wowed by the diversity of flavours, textures, and toppings, including some delectable vegetarian ingredients that impressed.

“As always, it is a tricky job to narrow down the winners, but I always just look to the pizzas I still remember and want all over again. Brigi’s pizza was just that! Even after 25 pizza slices, I remembered the very first one I tasted – her incredible take on Mac and Cheese!

“A huge congratulations to all the winners this year. The country is clearly full of pizza talent, and I am proud to judge this competition every year.”

Jim Winship, director of PAPA, said: “What we tasted at this event were no ordinary pizzas...with ingredients like vegan cheese sauce, vegan parmesan and panko breadcrumbs, our chefs continually push the boundaries of creativity within everyone’s favourite slice. We tasted some practically perfect-tasting pizzas today!

“Brigi’s creation included not only great tasting ingredients but ones that completely complemented each other – and the judging panel remembered all of its elements many pizzas later – which made it a clear winner.”

Jim continued: “This competition is always a highlight in the calendar. It is also a precursor to the annual [National Pizza Week](#), a seven-day celebration aiming to support the industry and celebrate the nation’s love of pizza. With all the events at this time of year, some say it’s pizza season in the industry. We just want to ensure that those pizza stars across the country are recognised for their hard work, creativity and passion in another challenging year.”

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## HOW TO MAKE BRITAIN’S BEST PIZZA

Ingredients:

- 260g Whitworth Bros. Strong Pizza Flour
- 60g Vegan Cheese Sauce
- 50g Vegan Cheese

- 30g Vegan Parmesan
- 30g Oven Roasted Panko Breadcrumbs
- 20g Mixed Herbs (rosemary, chives, parsley and oregano)

**Instructions:**

1. To make the dough, Add 620 g of cool water to the dough mixer, and 2 large spoons of sour dough starter. Start the mixer to mix the starter in and add 1kg of the Whitworth flour. Pour over 25g of extra virgin olive oil, and then 25g of salt and add 10g of sugar. Mix for around 15 minutes, then cover and leave to rest in the mixer for 15 minutes. Move to a surface, cover, and again rest for 30 minutes. Cut the dough in 260g pieces and round into a ball. Place in a dough tray and leave to rise for a few hours, dependent on the weather, then put in the fridge. Leave for at least 24 hours, removing from the fridge at least an hour before use.
2. Make the vegan cheese sauce by roasting carrots, cauliflower and a whole bulb of garlic in the oven until golden, seasoning with sea salt and black pepper. Once roasted, add the carrots, cauliflower and garlic into a blender with oat milk and cashew milk and blend until smooth.
3. Roll out the dough into a 12inch circle shape.
4. Spread the homemade vegan cheese sauce evenly onto the base.
5. Add the vegan cheese.
6. Cook the pizza in a high heat oven until the crust is golden.
7. Once the pizza has been cooked, top with oven roasted panko breadcrumbs, mixed herbs and vegan parmesan.

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**ENDS**

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**Editors Notes:**

**About the competition:**

The annual British competition invites pizza professionals from across the country to enter by creating an innovative pizza using the sponsor's ingredient as the key element and any other ingredients of their choice.

To enter, pizza makers submit written entries, along with photography, which is judged anonymously by the sponsors. Then, the top recipes chosen are invited to the finals, where creations are brought to life.

All contestants are asked to consider the judging criteria when creating their dish – which are taste, base quality, presentation, commercial viability, and innovative use of sponsors products.

The competition is also seen as the precursor to another annual event in the pizza calendar – National Pizza Week, which will be celebrated between 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**About National Pizza Week:**

National Pizza Week takes place from 20-26 November 2023. The annual event showcases the breadth, quality and innovation found within the UK's pizza sector. Find out more

<https://www.itspizzaweek.com/>

**Connect with us:**

**Website:** <https://www.itspizzaweek.com/>

**Instagram:** @pizzaandpastauk

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**About The Pizza, Pasta and Italian Food Association:**

The Pizza, Pasta & Italian Food Association (PAPA) is the only formal trade body in the UK representing the broad pizza and Italian food and drink industry. Simply put, they help their members to do better business, whether it be in challenging legislation on their behalf, helping them to understand the impact of changing markets and legislation on their business or in bringing their members together to network and learn. They do all they can to boost the profile of and the opportunity in the pizza, pasta and Italian food market, giving their members – whether they are manufacturers, suppliers or restaurateurs – the best platform from which they can trade.