I'll Take a Slice…
The history of the pizza pie

Not too many things in this world are better than a good slice of pizza *(granted, this is just an opinion, but it is one that is shared by millions of people worldwide)*. In fact, pizza aficionados have existed for thousands of years. In the ancient world, Middle Easterners would eat unleavened bread topped with oil and spices. Similar dishes were prepared by the Greeks and Romans. It was a long way from extra cheese and pepperoni, but these early creations were certainly a predecessor to the modern pizza pie.

Technically, the pizza that we know today didn't come along until much later. The ancient cultures didn't know about the tomato—one of the key ingredients in a good pizza. The tomato was brought back to Europe only after Christopher Columbus discovered the New World in the late 1492. It was grown extensively throughout Europe, but only because it had a neat look to it. The people thought that the tomato was poisonous. Finally, in the 1800s, it was revealed that the tomato was not only safe, it was also tasty.

With this new knowledge, the first pizzeria was opened in Naples in 1830. It must have done pretty well, because that same pizzeria is still in business today. Not surprisingly, the taste of pizza caught on in Europe—especially in Italy. In 1905, with a growing number of Italian immigrants coming to America, Gennaro Lombardi opened the first pizzeria in New York City.

Even though pizza had come to the United States, it was kept a secret for a while by the Italian-American community. It wasn't until World War II, when soldiers stationed in Europe tasted pizza firsthand, that it became an international hit. After the war, large pizza chains started to pop-up throughout the United States. Because pizza is quick to make, and easy to transport, the pizza delivery business soon followed.