

Think pizza and undoubtedly Naples and Mount Vesuvius will flash in your mind's eye. For as my article "Pizza Connection" (ITV, January 2015) explains, Naples was pizza's birthplace and home to the best *pizzeria* until c. 20 years ago. Then a revolution occurred and pizza spread north up the Italian peninsula and for a second time across the Atlantic, the first having been over a century ago brought by immigrants from Naples. Now it's a favorite dish worldwide.

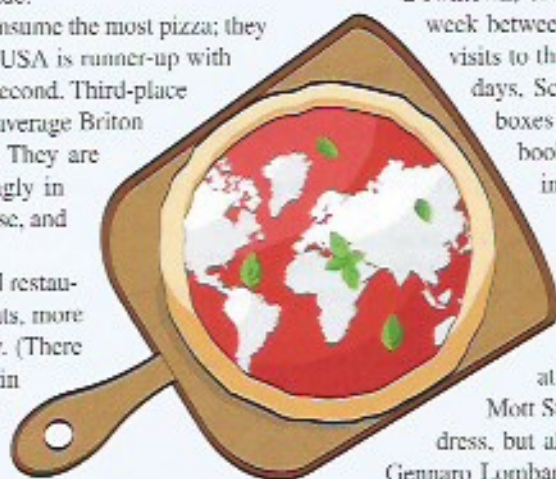
Perhaps surprisingly, Norwegians consume the most pizza; they each eat about 12 pounds per year. The USA is runner-up with Americans consuming 350 slices every second. Third-place goes to the United Kingdom where the average Briton eats pizza at least once every 10 days. They are followed by Germans, Italians (amazingly in 5th place), Russians, Australians, Japanese, and Chinese.

In the United States, where 17% of all restaurants are pizzerias(!), and, by some counts, more than 10% of these are in New York City. (There are from 2,350 to 32,000 pizzerias in NYC, depending on the counting criteria.) However, according to *www.es-tately.com*, pizza is most popular in West Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Ohio, Nevada, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut. According to TripAdvisor, the most pizza-loving US cities are San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami, San Diego, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Tampa, Washington D.C., Chicago, and Atlanta; instead, according to *businessinsider.com* they're Chicago, New York, New Haven, Orlando, San Francisco, Washington DC, Las Vegas, and San Diego.

Chicago and in New York have two very different pizza styles. In New York, like Rome, pizza is known for its thin, crispy crust topped with a thin layer of tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, and assorted toppings. Instead, Chicago's deep-dish pizza, more like Naples, is pie-like and too thick to fold, with an inch-deep smothering of tomato sauce and a variety of cheese and toppings at its center.

The best way to learn about the history of New York pizzas and which are the best of the Big Apple's pizzerias, join one of Scott Wiener's pizza tours (*www.scottpizzatours.com*). Born in suburban

DISCOVERING PIZZA ON A NEW YORK PIZZA TOUR



New Jersey, surprisingly Scott Wiener is not Italian; his ancestry is Jewish Polish and Russian. Yet from an early age, pizza became Scott's favorite food and, since his first pizza tour on August 27, 2008, has become not only the centerpiece of his diet, but also the subject of his livelihood. He employs 8 part-time guides but

often heads himself the two walking tours in two neighborhoods of Lower Manhattan and in two of Brooklyn: Williamsburg and Downtown, often arriving at a total of about 20 tours per week between the 9 of them. Each walking tour makes visits to three different pizzerias. In addition, on Sundays, Scott, who owns a collection of 1,480 pizza boxes from around the world and has written a book about it, guides a bus tour to four pizzerias in two boroughs, always Manhattan and then in one of the other four boroughs by rotation. He chooses which pizzerias to visit on the spur of the moment from a list of his 58 favorites.

Scott's Manhattan tours usually start at Lombardi's, 32 Spring St. on the corner of Mott St. Founded in 1897 at a slightly different address, but always in Lower Manhattan, and bought by Gennaro Lombardi in 1908, Lombardi's with its coal-burning oven, is the oldest pizzeria in New York and maybe in the United States.

On Sunday May 5th I took the Sunday bus tour (after a 2-year wait, it's so popular). After Lombardi's we stopped at family-style *Patrizia* with a generous menu of other Italian specialties besides pizza and at Brooklyn-born of Sicilian descent Frank Pinello's *Best Pizza*, both with old wood-burning ovens and both in Williamsburg, and last but not least, in fact my favorite of the four, *Kestè*, meaning *Quest'è*, "That's all I've got" or "That's the way it is" in Neapolitan dialect, on Fulton Street in Lower Manhattan's Financial District. Besides running the wood-burning pizzeria, owner Roberto Caporuscio, US President of *l'Associazione Pizzaioli Napoletani* makes his mozzarella in-house and, with his daughter Giorgia, since 2017, gives lessons in pizza-making. So far their graduates count some 300 professional *pizzaioli* in North and South America. Ask for a taste of Roberto's fried pizza with lard, the favorite snack of Italy's mountaineer shepherds. Roberto's the man who brought this recipe to New York. ☺

From left: the pizza of *Kestè* on Fulton Street in Lower Manhattan's Financial District. Scott Wiener with his collection of pizza boxes and the book about it. Far right, Roberto Caporuscio, US President of *l'Associazione Pizzaioli Napoletani*, with his daughter, Giorgia.

