

BETTER TOGETHER

Insights for operators with a passion for better.



Above All, A Better Tomato.

· Trending in the Field ·



Pizza for Health? Absolutely!

Several recent studies have found evidence that pizza, with its balance of grain, meat, dairy and vegetables, offers outstanding health benefits. An article in *Public Health Nutrition* reported, “Key pizza ingredients have been associated with improved cardiovascular health and cancer prevention.”...[Read More](#)

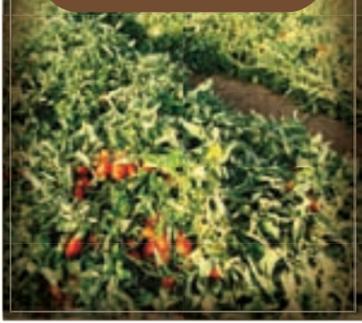
· Doing It Better ·

Training Your Staff on Food Allergies

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Tomato Forecast



Passion Shows



Recipe Inspiration



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Sautéed Veggie Pizza

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Pizza for Health? Absolutely!

Several recent studies have found evidence that pizza, with its balance of grain, meat, dairy and vegetables, offers outstanding health benefits. An article in *Public Health Nutrition* reported, “Key pizza ingredients have been associated with improved cardiovascular health and cancer prevention.” To cite an extreme example, pizzeria owner and fitness enthusiast Matt McClellan of Tour De Pizza went on a month-long pizza-only diet. Eating a slice of pizza every 2 ½ to 3 hours, he lost 25 pounds in 30 days. With government menu label regulations going into effect, independent pizzerias and chains are beefing up efforts to bring lower-calorie options to the forefront, using thinner or whole grain crusts, and topping them with more veggies and less meat and cheese. Some chains are testing lighter options with healthier toppings that total in at fewer than 300 calories per slice. Others have played with cracker-like thin crust that totals around 230 calories per two slices. “It’s not hard to make pizza part of a reasonable and balanced meal,” says Diane Zych, registered dietitian with BJC Healthcare in St. Louis. “A couple of slices of pizza with a salad or some fruit and a nonsugary drink offer a nutritious option.”



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· *Doing It Better* ·

Training Your Staff on Food Allergies



As food allergen and sensitivity awareness grows, guests look to clear communication for safe dining experiences. Follow these three steps to help prevent allergic reactions in your operation.

Educate yourself. Start by scanning your ingredient labels for common allergens: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy and wheat. Make a note of any dishes on the menu that contain a potential food allergy.

Train your staff. Give your staff written information about the allergens in every dish on the menu so they can anticipate diners' questions. Even cross-contamination can

cause a reaction in some people, so ask your staff to use the same safety protocol they'd use for raw chicken—wash hands, knives and cutting boards before and after handling allergens. Consider looking into [ServSafe Allergens online training course](#) as part of your process.

Be transparent. To make it easier on your staff, consider adding a menu note that asks guests with allergies to mention them to their server. Always err on the side of over-communicating; your food-allergic guests will appreciate it.

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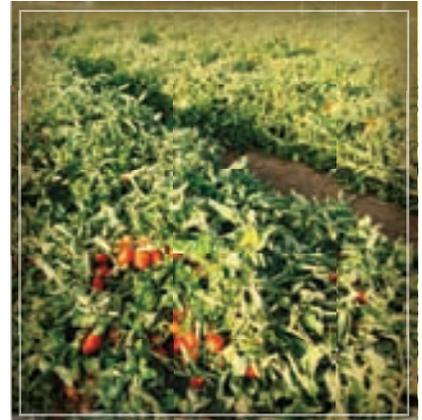
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· Tomato Forecast ·

Spring Planting Off to a Solid Start

Tomato transplanting is off to a strong, early start in California's central valley area. Tomatoes are currently planted through the mid-August harvest date, and while the cool nights have caused slower-than-usual growth, the plants look strong. Season-to-date rain and snowpack are well ahead of last year and nearing historical averages. El Niño has helped California's drought situation, but full recovery will require two to four years of at-or-above normal precipitation.



Central Valley Project growers, those located in West Fresno County, received a 5% water allocation from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation this year, up from the 0% received the previous two years, but still very low considering the amount of snow and rainfall received year-to-date. The pest carrying the Curly Top Virus (Beet Leafhopper) has been reported at fairly high levels so far, but at this point it has not been detected in the fields.

Most Northern tomato growers received a 45% water allocation from the USBR and should not have any water concerns for this growing season. In fact, the wet conditions caused by El Niño have put some growers slightly behind schedule for planting. At the moment, scheduling isn't a significant concern since harvest in that area won't begin until the middle of August.

From an industry standpoint, the California Tomato Grower's Association settled tomato pricing early this year. Conventional pricing is down 9.4% versus 2015 at \$72.50 per ton due to drought relief, falling permanent crop prices and reduced bulk paste demand. Increasing demand has caused organic tomato pricing to decouple from conventional pricing, climbing up substantially to \$150 per ton. Total crop size has not yet been called, but will certainly be down from last year's record of 14.3 million tons.

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· *Passion Shows* ·



“Passion Pays” Pays Off for Panino’s Pizzeria

One winner from this year’s International Pizza Challenge saw his passion for quality ingredients pay even more. Tony Ganesh of Panino’s Pizzeria won \$500 for placing 3rd in the Pan Division. He then received an additional \$500 from the Escalon Passion Pays promotion, which awards International Pizza Challenge winners bonus prize money for using Escalon products in their recipe. His award-winning pizza, Grandma Pizza Pie, is a thinner version of Sicilian pizza which features an authentic sauce made with a combination of 6-in-1 Peeled Ground Tomatoes and Bontá Puree—both from Escalon. Congratulations, Tony!

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· Recipe Inspiration ·



Sautéed Veggie Pizza

This thin crust pizza is destined to be a winner with patrons seeking out healthy menu options. It features a wholesome whole-wheat crust topped with fresh and colorful sautéed vegetables.

Ingredients:

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|---|---|---|
| · 1 whole-wheat 12" pizza dough | · 1 cup chopped button mushrooms | · 6 oz Allegro™ Classic Italian Pizza Sauce |
| · 1 tbsp olive oil | · ½ tsp each dried or fresh basil and oregano | · fresh basil for garnish |
| · ¾ cup each chopped red and yellow bell pepper | · ½ tsp garlic powder | |
| · ½ cup chopped red onion | · ¼ tsp sea salt | |

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Add olive oil to large skillet and bring to medium heat. Once hot, add peppers and onion. Season with salt, basil, oregano, and garlic powder. Cook until tender and slightly charred. Add mushrooms and cook a few minutes longer. Set aside.
3. On a floured surface, roll out dough to ⅛" thickness. Top with pizza sauce and sautéed vegetables.
4. Bake for 17-20 min or until crisp and golden brown.
5. Top with fresh basil and serve.

Yield: 1-12" pizza

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