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5 Pizza: Delicious, Nutritious, Affordable, and Adaptable

6 Pizza is everywhere in New York City. Busy commuters devour folded pizza slices while  
7 hailing cabs, college students follow pizza's delicious aroma to find club events, and Mayor DeBlasio  
8 creates a controversy every time he eats pizza with a fork and knife. Even the rats can be seen dragging  
9 pizza back to their subway burrows. Nonetheless, New Yorkers debate whether pizza's popularity is a  
10 good thing. Opponents of pizza allege that it is fattening, messy, and low-quality, a convenient option  
11 that is filling but unhealthy. Despite this reputation, pizza should be praised for its intricate flavors,  
12 nutrition, affordability, and cultural adaptability.

13 Although pizza critics argue that it is a mouthful of saltiness and grease, pizza has complex  
14 flavors and pleasing textures. Pizza blends all of the major tastes: salty, sweet, sour, and bitter. The  
15 salty cheese and tangy tomato sauce excite the taste buds; the rich olive oil and mild crust calm the  
16 palate. Depending on how long the pizza is baked, the crust can be soft and chewy, toasted and crispy,  
17 or even burnt and mildly bitter. Pizza also combines the stretchy textures of cheese with the crunch of  
18 the crust to yield a satisfying and delicious dining experience.

19 Though critics may admit that pizza is tasty, they erroneously claim that it is unhealthy. This  
20 claim is disputed by Alicia Jalowsky, a researcher at the Institute of Nutrition Studies, who finds that  
21 pizza is actually a good part of a balanced diet because "its ingredients include grains, vegetables,  
22 dairy, meat, and fruit – all the major food groups, except sweets" (13). Jalowsky also explains that the  
23 crust is made of grains, which provide dietary fiber, and the cheese is packed with protein (19).  
24 Moreover, the sauce, filled with onions, garlic, and tomato chunks, supplies vitamins and antioxidants.  
25 Pizza toppings such as fresh, vitamin-rich garden vegetables and lean meats can further contribute to a

26 healthy diet. Additionally, pizzerias today offer gluten-free crusts and vegan pizzas. Without a doubt,  
27 diners can enjoy pizza without sacrificing their health.

28 Besides being a healthy part of a complete diet, pizza is also one of the most affordable foods  
29 available: it can cost as little as \$1 per slice. According to a study conducted by the New York City  
30 Department of Food, the average fast food burger meal costs about \$8, while a complete pizza meal  
31 with a drink costs as little as \$2.75 (147). A person can feed a family of four with one large pizza for  
32 less than \$20. This is a standout bargain, even when compared to other cheap food options. Therefore,  
33 New Yorkers seeking an affordable meal know they can always turn to pizza.

34 Pizza is not only a delicious, healthy, and affordable food option, but it is also easily adaptable  
35 to reflect different cultures. The classic Margherita pizza was created to honor Queen Margherita of  
36 Italy. Its red tomato sauce, green basil, and white cheese correspond to the colors of the stripes on the  
37 Italian flag (Salucci et al. 226). New York-style pizzas evolved from its classic form to include a bit  
38 more char on the crust, while Chicago pizzerias pioneered the hearty deep-dish crust. Similarly, pizzas  
39 around the world are customized with distinct toppings to represent diverse cultures and preferences,  
40 including smoked reindeer and cod in Sweden; kangaroo, snake, and crocodile in Australia; and squid  
41 ink and seaweed in Japan (235). By reflecting different cultures through various ingredients and  
42 presentation, pizza allows consumers to feel a deeper, cultural connection to the food. Clearly, there is  
43 no universally correct way to enjoy pizza.

44 Far from being mere junk food, pizza turns out to be a delicious, nutritious, affordable, and  
45 adaptable meal. With its infinite variety of toppings, pizza offers a wealth of healthy choices to its  
46 consumers. Furthermore, it has the potential to please anyone from a food connoisseur to hungry  
47 citizens searching for a quick and affordable option no matter where they are in the world. This food  
48 will only improve as future generations continue to develop new and innovative ways to make pizza.

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