



# 2025 International Pizza Challenge

**OFFICIAL Rules and Regulations for the World's Best Cheese Slice, Traditional, Non-Traditional, Neapolitan, and Pan Divisions**  
(Las Vegas Convention Center - March 25-27, 2025)

## Eligibility

- The contest is open only to owners, managers, chefs, industry consultants, pizza pop ups, social media influencers, or employees 18 years or older from the restaurant and pizzeria industries. Pizza Today or Pizza Expo employees and their family members, are not eligible, nor are employees or representatives of advertisers, exhibitors, other suppliers to the industry or their affiliates. If a competitor falsely claims any position or title affiliated with the IPC or IPCNE they will be suspended from competing in any IPC for a minimum of 2 years and possibly expelled from any IPC competition permanently.

- Past division winners are not eligible to compete in the same division for a period of two years. In addition, past World Champion Pizza Maker of the Year winners will not be allowed to re-enter in any division but can be invited back to compete in the “Best of the Best” competition.

Registration for all five (5) divisions is open online at [PizzaExpo.com](http://PizzaExpo.com) and will remain open until all available places are taken. Competitors may enter the competition when they register to attend Pizza Expo; or a spot in one of the divisions may be added later to an attendee registration by logging in to the [PizzaExpo.com](http://PizzaExpo.com) registration system. A valid registration is interpreted as the acceptance by the competitor of all contest rules.

- Each competitor will have 30 minutes to assemble and bake his or her pizzas. competitors will be timed by Pizza Expo staff. In addition, each competitor will be required to clean up his or her assembly space prior or immediately after presenting the pizza for judging. Failure to adhere to time restrictions or to clean up in a presentable fashion will result in an automatic deduction of 5 points on each judge's scorecard.

## **Registration**

- A maximum of 100 entries will be accepted in the Traditional and Neapolitan divisions; and a maximum of 110 for Non-Traditional, 60 for Pan division and 75 for World's Best Cheese Slice.
- Only one division per competitor will be accepted, with a maximum of five (5) entries per establishment (one per division). Only registered competitors will be allowed in the contest area; no assistants may go into the area. Please note: You must be pre-registered as a Pizza Expo attendee to enter. Entries will not be accepted until registration and contest fees are paid. No on-site entries will be permitted, unless approved by the operations team.
- Entries close in any division once it reaches the above-mentioned maximum number of participants. There is a wait list when full please contact Pizza Expo to be added.

## **Judging/Scoring/Additional Competitions**

- All pizzas in all categories will be judged blind. This means you cannot put and brands, names or anything else "identifiable" on your ingredient card. Also, no identifiable items such as special plates, skewers or other items can go in with the pizza. Breaking these rules in any way will result in immediate disqualification.
- Pizzas for all divisions will be scored against themselves on how well they deliver on each sub category using a scale of 1-10 by an expert panel of judges These categories include a combination of crust, sauce, cheese, toppings, bake, overall taste, creativity, and appearance depending on the division, with an emphasis on the culinary attributes.
- The top five (5) scoring competitors from the Cheese, Traditional, Non-Traditional, Pan, and Neapolitan divisions based on total points will advance to the Finals on Thursday from 8am-11am (7am mandatory meeting) and the winner from each division's finals will advance to the Pizza Maker of the Year competition.
- Scores will typically be announced on the Pizza Expo facebook and X page the evening the division ran. Some divisions are announced earlier, please listen to announcements at the show for specifics. All scores will also be displayed on the interactive screens located in the IPC Area.
- Decisions by the judges are final in all aspects of this contest.
- Feedback from judges on the scoresheets will be available upon request after 5/1/25. Please email your request to [jeremy@masterpizza.com](mailto:jeremy@masterpizza.com)

## Prizes/Awards

- Regional winners from the Traditional and Non-Traditional divisions will receive a recognition plaque and \$500. Regional winners for the World's Best Cheese Slice and Pan Sub-Divisions will receive plaques. Winners of the Traditional and Non-Traditional divisions will receive a trophy and a check for \$7,500. Second and third place will receive \$2,000 and \$1,000, respectively. The winners of the Cheese, Neapolitan and Pan divisions will receive \$5,000. Second and third place will receive \$1,000 and \$750 respectively for all three divisions. The winner of the Pizza Maker of the Year competition will claim the title of World Champion, a trophy and an additional \$5,000 prize.
- Winners will be expected to provide banking information and taxpayer identification number (W-9/8) at the conclusion of the competition to facilitate the payment. Payment terms will be Net 90 days. Payment of any local, state, or federal taxes are the responsibilities of the winners. There will be no substitutions of prizes as offered except at the discretion of Pizza Expo®. Prizes are non-transferable.

## General Rules

- Competitors must provide dough, sauce, cheese, and toppings for (3-6) pizzas depending on your division, it's not a bad idea to have extra dough for potential problems. Please note that some products may be provided by our preferred product sponsors and available for use. A dough prep and temporary kitchen area will be available. Entrants will receive an email detailing ovens, storage and other items provided in these areas. Basic kitchen items are available but if you need something specific, we recommend bringing it with you. Drink pairing is not allowed in any division.
- Ingredient preparation will be allowed in the designated prep areas prior to your table time to allow immediate building of the pizza as soon as a competitor hits their table.

## Special Rules by Division

**The World's Best Cheese Slice.** Competitors provide the dough, traditional red tomato sauce, cheese/cheese blend and spices. **NO par-baking.** Once the pizza enters the oven ONLY a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil (infused or not), grated cheese & dry spices/herbs after baking are acceptable; **NO** other drizzles, toppings, cheeses, or work on the pizza is allowed once the pizza enters the oven. Fresh basil is not permitted post-bake. Please note this division is **open to all crust styles.** You may choose the best three (3) slices that will be presented to the judges.

**Non-Traditional Division.** There are no restrictions on dough, sauce, toppings, or styles.

**Traditional (American) Division.** Competitors provide the dough, cheese/cheese blend and spices. They must use a red tomato sauce. No more than two (2) of the following toppings may be added: Pepperoni, Sausage, Bacon, Ham, Mushrooms, Peppers, Tomatoes, Onions, and Olives. Please note that different varieties of these toppings will constitute only one (1) topping. **NO par-baking.** Once the pizza enters the oven ONLY a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil (infused or not) is acceptable; **NO** other toppings, fresh basil, cheeses, spices &/or finishers can be added once the pizza enters the oven. Pizzas in this division must be traditional round pizzas ranging in size from 12"-18". A competitor's pizza will be disqualified if the judges decide it contains too many toppings or impermissible toppings.

**Neapolitan Division.** For the Pizza Napoletana style each competitor must make 1 pizza for the preliminary round and be prepared to make up to 2 more if they advance to the finals and then pizza maker of the year. The products that provide the base for "Pizza Napoletana" include wheat-flour type "00" or type "0", (**NO** meat tenderizer, malt or other dough enhancers will be allowed.) Toppings include plum tomatoes or cherry tomatoes, marine salt, extra-virgin olive oil, fresh basil, fresh mozzarella, and grated cheese depending on the style. The dough must be kneaded by hand or with a low-speed mixer. After the rising process, the dough must be formed by hand without the help of a rolling pin or other machine and must weigh between 250-280g, be no more than 3 mm (1/8 in) thick at the center and a minimum of 10" in diameter. The pizza must be baked for 45-90 seconds in a 485o C (905o F) pizza oven. There are three official variants:

**1. Pizza Napoletana, Marinara** which is made with crushed plum tomatoes, salt, fresh garlic, oregano, & olive oil. (All ingredients must be added **BEFORE** baking);

**2. Pizza Napoletana, Margherita Extra** made with crushed plum tomatoes and chopped fresh cherry tomatoes, mozzarella di bufala, grated cheese, extra-virgin olive oil & fresh basil. (All ingredients must be added **BEFORE** baking);

**3. Pizza Napoletana, Margherita** made with crushed plum tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, grated cheese, extra-virgin olive oil & fresh basil. (All ingredients must be added **BEFORE** baking).

**Pan Division.** Styles that fall into this category include, but are not limited to, the following: Roman, Chicago Deep Dish/Stuffed, Detroit, Grandma/Sicilian, Cast-Iron, Ohio Valley, Old Forge. There are no restrictions on dough, sauce, or toppings, except that the pizzas must conform to a pan style. The top scoring Roman, Chicago Deep Dish/Stuffed, Grandma, Sicilian & Cast-Iron pizzas will receive an award & the top scoring **Detroit style** pizza will again receive the Shawn Randazzo Memorial Award. Par Baking of Dough will

be allowed on-site that will not count against your time. See an IPC team member for timing etc.

## 2025 Schedule

Tuesday, March 25 (Preliminary Rounds)

Top 5 scores in each division will advance to Thursday finals

Division	Time	Finals Thurs	# of Participants
World's Best Cheese Slice	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Yes	75
Pan	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Yes	60
Traditional	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Yes	100
CMAB – Pro Preliminaries	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Yes	10

Wednesday, March 26 (Preliminary Rounds)

Division	Time	Finals Thurs	# of Participants
Non-Traditional	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Yes	110
Neapolitan	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Yes	100
Catupiry	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	No	30
Daiya Vegan	1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	No	30

Thursday, March 27

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM – Finals for all divisions MANDATORY FINALS MEETING AT 7AM  
Traditional, Non-Traditional, Neapolitan, Pan, & World's Best Cheese Slice

10:15 AM – 11:15 AM – CMAB Finals (Publicly Judged, Awards to follow Immediately)

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM – Best of the Best (Publicly Judged)

12:45 PM – 1:45 PM – Pizza Maker of the Year (Publicly Judged)

1:45 PM – 2:00 PM – Mixer Giveaway, Awards, & WPC Donation

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM – Awards, Recognition, & More Giveaways

3:00 PM – \$10k MEGA Bucks Winner