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Frozen Pizza

July 16, 2005

This year (2005) marks the 100th anniversary of pizza in America. To celebrate, writer and radio and television personality (and reputed pizza maven) Ed Levine penned [Pizza: A Slice of Heaven: The Ultimate Guide and Companion](#) (Universe Publishing, 2005). It's an indispensable resource for pizza lovers everywhere who find themselves in need of a fix, whether they're in Baltimore or Bangkok, Memphis or Marseille. Jane and Michael Stern say Ed Levine "is an opinionated and passionate *fresser* (food lover) who shares his best secrets with you."

To cover all bases while researching the book, Ed and his pal and colleague Jeffrey Steingarten, Vogue magazine's food critic, taste-tested seven brands of supermarket frozen pizza. Here are their tasting notes:

- DiGiorno Thin Crispy Crust Four Cheese Pizza: Crisp crust, but not much flavor. Salty. Tasted like bad crackers.
- Freschetta's 5 Italian Cheese Brick Oven Pizza: The discrete pockets of sauce and cheese were a plus. The crust was crisp, but completely lacking in flavor. Resembled Pizza Goldfish.
- American Flatbread's Organic Tomato Sauce and Three Cheese Pizza: This one is made in a wood-fired stone-and-clay oven. The pliant and chewy whole-wheat crust tasted good on it own and had hole structure, as a good crust should. The sweet smell was curious until a check of the ingredients showed pure Vermont maple syrup high up on the list. Not surprising from a company in Waitsfield,

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Vermont.

- Whole Food Market's 365 Four Cheese: Thick and unappetizing with a cheesy sludge on top. Pretty awful.
- Amy's Cheese Pizza: Crisp crust. Organic tomatoes and flour. Honey listed in the ingredients gives a vaguely sweet aftertaste.
- California Pizza Kitchen's Five Cheese & Tomato Pizza: Puffy crust and generally tasty in a bad-food way. Chunks of tomato instead of sauce. Whey solids give an unripe cheese taste that Jeffrey didn't like.
- Linda McCartney Stone-Fired Crust Cheese Pizza: The worst pizza of the bunch. Crust looked and tasted like cardboard. Pseudo-tangy, yucky topping.

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