

PIZZA facts & fancies

First-To-Market Frozen Margherita Pizza Has Roots In Royal Italian Tastes

(NAPSA)—In the late 19th century, little did Italy's Queen Margherita know that one day she'd become the namesake of a pizza that is legendary in its simplicity and flavor. Nor could she have foreseen that, 112 years later, Freschetta® would create the first frozen variety of Margherita pizza that pays tribute to her fondness for quality, authenticity and taste.

It is generally agreed that pizza itself comes from humble beginnings, and was considered a peasant's meal in Italy for many centuries. As legend has it, pizza's status was improved when Queen Margherita—who was accompanying her husband, King Umberto I of Savoia, on an inspection of the Italian kingdom—observed commoners eating a curious “flat bread” and asked her guards to bring her a piece.

To her delight—and to the disdain of her highbrow peers—the queen liked what she ate and henceforth sought out pizza every time she left the palace.

In 1889, on a visit to Naples, the king and queen requested that baker Raffaele Esposito—owner of a tavern called Pietro Il Pizzaiolo—prepare a special pizza meal for them. Of the three varieties he presented, the queen particularly loved the pizza featuring tomatoes, mozzarella cheese and basil. Not only did it strike a chord with the queen's taste buds, but the pizza's red, white and green color scheme resembled the Italian flag—so she sang praises for its patriotism as well!

To honor the queen, Esposito named his creation “Pizza Margherita.” His tasteful embellishment of a simple peasant dish thus elevated pizza to a new level and set the standard for modern-day pizza. The Pietro Il Pizzaiolo, now more than 200 years old and renamed Pizzeria Brandi, still proudly displays a royal thank-you note signed by Galli Camillio, “head of the table of the royal household,” dated June 1889.

More than a century after the crowning of the official pizza of Italy, the Freschetta Culinary Council™ is bringing consumers the first authentic frozen Margherita pizza that lives up to the



The Freschetta Culinary Council™ has created the first-ever Frozen Margherita pizza.

pizza's history and reputation.

The Freschetta Culinary Council is a group of five renowned chefs/restaurateurs from across the country. The Council includes Bradley Ogden, chef/co-owner of *The Lark Creek Inn* and *Yankee Pier* in San Francisco; Tony Mantuano, of Chicago's world famous *Spiaggia*; Robert McGrath, chef/owner of *Roaring Fork* in Scottsdale; Walter Potenza, chef/owner of *La Locanda del Coccio* and *Aquaviva Eurobistro* in Providence, R.I.; and Boston chef Daniele Baliani, well known for his work at *Pignoli*. They have been meeting every two to three months for nearly two years to work with Freschetta's Research and Development team on new recipes for the brand.

The Margherita pizza they have developed was heavily influenced by a trip the chefs took to Italy, where they studied with an Italian *pizzaiolo* (pizza master). The chefs were very conscious of the important place Margherita pizza holds in culinary history, and they were intent on creating a product that does justice to its legacy. The Freschetta Margherita pizza features a unique sauce with a rich tomato flavor and fresh basil; a meal fit for a queen—and sure to satisfy the tastes of any discerning pizza lover.

The chefs' innovations didn't end with Margherita. They have two other savory new Freschetta frozen pizza varieties—Southwest Chicken Supreme and Roasted Garlic Chicken. Together the Council continues the progression of a food that rose from humble beginnings to a place of royalty in the culinary world.