



LEFT TO RIGHT: DELICIOUS WITH EVERY BITE, PIZZA AT VARUNI NAPOLI



LEFT TO RIGHT: NEW JERSEY STYLE PIE AT O4W PIZZA



PERFECT PIZZA PAIRING

What goes best with pizza? (OK, besides beer?) Gelato! Savor the taste of Italy at **Paolo's Gelato Italiano**. Paolo, an Italian native, studied gelato around the globe and settled on Virginia-Highland as the perfect place to open his gelato store. Sixty-two flavors rotate with the seasons, and we love the **hazelnut** and **mint chocolate chip**. Another Atlanta team is putting a Southern touch on this European treat with **Honeysuckle Gelato**. They've grown out of their food truck and into a cozy space at Ponce City Market (or you can find them in your local grocer's freezer). We recommend the **bourbon and brown butter with pecans**. You're welcome. paolosgelato.com, honeysucklegelato.com



Just add cheese

Atlanta loves both traditional and unique pizza flavors, like **barbecue**, Thai, and Mexican. Just as important as the flavor, though, is the dining experience. These places draw in the locals for their enticing ambiance and their savory Italian pies.

■ **VARUNI NAPOLI** For the best Neapolitan in the city, we say head to Varuni Napoli in Midtown, where Luca Varuni is stealing hearts with his Italian charm and impeccable pizza pies. Dive into the Porreca Piccante with hot soppressata and spicy nduja or the Spacca Napoli with three cheeses, roasted mushrooms, caramelized onions, plus truffle salt and truffle oil. Ingredients are either imported from Italy or sourced

from local farmers and baked in 900-degree wood-fired ovens. Sit at casual, communal tables or find a fun spot on the shaded patio with a drink—they make their own limoncello and offer Prosecco on tap. varuni.us

■ **AMMAZZA** Skip the queue in front of this Old Fourth Ward pizzeria when you enter and head straight back to the bar's seating area to place an order. The signa-

ture pizza is the Ammazza, with Italian sausage, roasted peppers, Vidalia onions, and basil. Like it spicy? Get the Inferno, smoldering with spicy soppressata and Calabria peppers. Vegetarians will love the Contadino, made with roasted artichokes, wild mushrooms, and olives. The design and décor gives off a hipster vibe and is definitely a fun place for guests. ammazza.com

■ **ANTICO** This joint is BYOB, and they serve pizza until the dough runs out. An overnight sensation, Antico makes its Neapolitan pizza with items imported straight from Italy. Not only are the ovens from Italy, but even the

flour used in their dough is imported. Don't be surprised that the original location, on the outskirts of Midtown, has no traditional dining area. Guests sit at communal tables right inside the kitchen. The two most popular pies are the Margherita and the San Gennaro, featuring sausage with sweet peppers. littleitalia.com

■ **O4W PIZZA** The Grandma Pie is where it's at. Though there's no meat on this pizza, it's bursting with flavor. The

simple-yet-perfect blend of garlic, basil, mozzarella, and sauce comes together for bite after perfect bite, and the thick slices offer a nice contrast to the thin Neapolitan pizza that is so popular elsewhere in the city. Owner Anthony Silva says you can't go wrong with his favorite, either: plain cheese. Nope—it's not located in Old Fourth Ward, but the name gives homage to where this Duluth eatery originated. O4Wpizza.com

■ **BLUE MOON** Though most of Atlanta may be crazy for Neapolitan pizza, Blue Moon Pizza is serving up some fantastic traditional pies with nontraditional toppings. The Luna (chorizo sausage, caramelized onions, jalapeños, spicy ranch, black olives, and cilantro) is the way to go when you visit this establishment with locations throughout Atlanta. Get it to go with their take-and-bake pizzas or have them come to you. They purchased a 1961 Interna-

tional Harvester Fire Truck and converted it into a pizza machine, complete with a stone pizza oven. bluemoonpizza.com

■ **VARASANO'S** Nana's, the house special pie made with a secret blend of Italian herbs, is a recipe from the founder's grandmother. But what does an engineer know about pizza? Quite a lot, actually. Jeff Varasano left his IT job after creating a cult-like following for his thin-crust Neapolitan-style pizzas. For something out of the ordinary, try the New Haven Clam pizza topped with clams, mussels, and garlic. You can order it with white or red sauce. Only stopping by on a layover? Not to worry: you can grab a slice at the Atlanta airport. varasanos.com



TURN THE PAGE FOR LUCA'S SECRET DOUGH RECIPE



MELLOW IN ATLANTA

Many people think of Mellow Mushroom as a chain, but to us in Atlanta, they are a group of locals who hit the big time, with more than 180 stores in over 21 states. The first Mellow Mushroom opened near Georgia Tech in 1974, and that 1970s free spirit is still what drives each eclectic, bright, art-filled

location. Their mission: serve delicious pizza and cold draft beer. You can always build your own pizza, but we love the House Special—a red sauce with five types of meat and a pile of veggies, or go global with the Thai Dye pie featuring grilled curry chicken and Thai chili sauce. mellowmushroom.com



SHHHH! LUCA'S SUPER-SECRET DOUGH RECIPE!

FROM CHEF LUCA VARUNI
OF VARUNI NAPOLI

5 grams yeast
4½ cups water
50 grams fine sea salt
8 cups “double zero” flour

1. Dissolve the yeast in the water by rubbing it between your fingers. Once the yeast is completely dissolved, add the salt. Slowly add the flour and begin mixing by hand in a circular motion for 25 minutes. (Note: you can also use a mixer at a low speed for approximately 20 minutes.)
2. Press the dough with your hands, forming a round crust. Push the accumulated air to the edge without squeezing the edge, as it needs to have a thickness of around ¾ of an inch. The middle should be just less than ¼ inch thick.
3. Preheat the oven to 500 degrees. (Note: in the restaurant, Chef Varuni cooks his pizza in 900-degree ovens.) Add your favorite toppings to the crust and bake for 6 minutes.



“Our dough is made from four ingredients: flour, water, sea salt, and mother yeast. Then we add one more element—air. The result is the most flavorful Neapolitan pizza you have ever tasted.”

—CHEF LUCA VARUNI