



Even the Google Doodle is taking advantage of the pandemic-fueled pizza boom

Pizza sales soared during the pandemic — and experts say the trend is likely to continue.

The pizza boom continues.

Americans have long devoured more than their fair share of the Italian favorite. But pizza sales soared during the pandemic, with the major chains seeing a combined 6% uptick to \$27.5 billion in 2020, according to Restaurant Business Online.

And while the fervor may have leveled in recent months, some pizza businesses say they find themselves on solid ground and looking to expand.

Even Google is getting in on the pizza game — literally. The internet search giant recently unveiled a pizza-themed interactive challenge as part of its regular series of Google Doodles. Google officials explained that it was tied to the fourth anniversary of UNESCO, recognizing the art of Italian pizza-makers as part of the world's "intangible cultural heritage."

But pizza is not just about heritage. It's about

big business. There's no real mystery as to why pizza is popular, culinary professionals and experts say.

"There's an incredible canvas for creativity," said Arlene Spiegel, a New York-based restaurant consultant.

Consider just one trending pizza style — the Detroit pie, with cheese that goes all the way to the crust. It's now offered throughout the country.

Pizza establishments did especially well during the pandemic, culinary pros say, for one basic reason: These businesses were adept at offering delivery and takeout for many years prior to the health crisis. So, when the pandemic prompted more consumers to order from home, pizzerias were able to easily rise to the challenge.

"They didn't have to reinvent the wheel. They already had the platform and the technology," said Spiegel. ●