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America's test kitchen best frozen pizza

While we normally suggest making meals from scratch here at HuffPost -- especially when you can make pizzas that look this good -- we know that there are nights when frozen pizza is the only option. No one expects greatness when they heat a frozen pizza for dinner, but we all hope for something that will at least hit the spot. Unfortunately, that's not often the case.The fine folks at America's Test Kitchen felt our struggle and they set out to find who's making the best frozen pizza. They tested pepperoni, because clearly that's the most popular option. Being thorough and scientific, they rated seven different pies based on a multitude of factors: cheese, sauce and crust, naturally. They pitted new frozen artisanal options against national top sellers and their results were somewhat surprising. What they found was a wide range of results that ranked from terrible to terrific. Here are the top three: Pizzeria! By DiGiorno Primo Pepperoni the number one spot. Freschetta Brick Oven Crust Pepperoni and Italian Style Cheese Red Baron Fire Baked Pepperoni PizzaSort of surprising, but what was most shocking was who they ranked last. Head on over to their site for the full review and to see which frozen pizza you should never waste your money on.\r\r","\r\r","\r\r"],"adCount":0}}> When that next craving hits, make sure your freezer is filled with the best frozen pizzas. We found the best options no matter what kind of pie you like—from thin crust to pan-style. Our editors and experts handpick every product we feature. We may earn a commission from your purchases.Learn more. via merchant via merchant While you can doctor up a frozen pizza with extras, there's nothing like popping a pizza out of the box and being happy with the heaps of topping already scattered across the pie. That's what you can expect with a Palermo's Neighborhood Pizzeria Pepperoni Pizza. "There's a healthy amount of pepperoni on top of this one," explains the Test Kitchen's Mark Neufang. And it's not just traditional pepperoni slices piled on top of this top pizza pick, you'll also find chopped bits of spicy pepperoni as well for even more flavor and texture. The pepperoni is just the start with this top pick. The crust on this 'za is best described as hand-tossed—not thin by any means but without the bulk of a deep dish pizza. "It's thin in the center with a bit of a thicker edge," describes Mark. And that very edge of the pizza? It's sprinkled with parmesan for a bit of salt and cheesiness—perfect additions to this pizza. Combine all those toppings with a cheese-sprinkled crust and a tomato-forward sauce and you've got a favorite in our Test Kitchen. via merchant via merchant Frozen pizza often gets a bad rap since so many options are flat in appearance and flavor. That's not the case with DiGiorno Rising Crust Pepperoni Pizza. DiGiorno's pepperoni pizza has a lofty pan-style crust. "This one has a thick crust with great color," explains Ellie Crowley in the Test Kitchen. "The bottom of the pie is crisp but the crust has a nice, soft and chewy interior—nicer than most frozen pizzas." A splash of tomato sauce tops the plush crust. Some folks may crave a little more with the bready crust, but our team enjoyed the flavor nonetheless. What makes this pie really stand out (besides that top-notch thick crust) is the crispy pepperoni. "There's something smoky, hearty and fun about this pizza," says Mark. Who can resist that? via merchant via merchant Are you looking for pizza with a cracker-thin crust? Try Connie's Classic Thin Crust Pizza. Connie's pizza has a perfectly crisp crust that's finished with a bit of semolina on the bottom. That touch of coarse cornmeal adds a bit of crunch and flavor that our team found so appealing. This pizza is so much more than that crispy crust, though. Connie's frozen pizza is piled with plenty of toppings including a tester-favorite pepperoni. "This pepperoni tastes fresh and a bit spicy—yum!" says Ellie. No need to upgrade this pie with extras, though we do have some frozen pizza upgrades if you're interested in more! Also worth noting is the tomato sauce on this pizza. It's seasoned well with plenty of Italian herbs and a good amount of ripe tomato flavor—nothing tinned or artificial here! via merchant via merchant Frozen pizzas typically fall into two camps: thick crust or thin crust. Home Run Inn defies those expectations with a totally different kind of frozen pizza crust—one that our Test Kitchen team enjoyed and had testers going back for more. "The crust here isn't too thick or too thin," says Ellie. Home Run Inn's frozen pizza crust falls in the middle and has a texture that our team found downright crave-able. "It's a flaky crust—almost like a croissant," says the Test Kitchen's Maggie Knoebel. This unique and tempting texture makes it easy to want to go back for another slice. Of course, the plentiful and gooey cheese also makes this pie a winner. "This one has the best cheese by far," says Maggie. It pairs well with that rich crispy crust and perfectly spiced (though not spicy) pepperoni. While our team doesn't think you'll have any leftovers, they do have some tips on how to reheat pizza so it's just as good the next day. How We Tested Frozen Pizzas Our Test Kitchen team sampled 10 different frozen pizza brands in this taste test. These brands included thick- and thin-crust varieties. While our team would have loved to sample dozens of pizzas topped with everything from sausage to veggies to multiple kinds of cheese, we narrowed in on the most popular variety of frozen pizza: pepperoni. Each pizza was prepped in a standard oven (not a specialty indoor pizza oven) and judged according to these major categories: Appearance: No one should be able to resist a good pizza! Before you even slice, you should want to dive into pie with plenty of cheese, a golden crust and evenly distributed pepperoni (though we have a trick on how to arrange toppings for optimal enjoyment!). Toppings: Our team judged the quality of the cheese and pepperoni as well as the distribution of these toppings. Generous amounts of pepperoni are always appreciated! Crust: So often frozen pizzas have crusts that, well, taste like cardboard. We wanted to find flavorful and satisfying crusts—thick or thin. Overall flavor: The crust, sauce, cheese and pepperoni should all work together to make a satisfying pizza to eat on a Friday night in. It's that simple! Taste of Home Our Test Kitchen is constantly testing food, kitchen gadgets and cleaning gear looking for brands that deserve the right to be called Test Kitchen-Preferred. If you want to fill your pantry and fridge with the best products, check out these tests: The best frozen mozzarella sticks The best light beer The best pickles WE MAY EARN AFFILIATE FEES FOR PURCHASES USING OUR LINKS (AT NO ADDITIONAL COST TO YOU). LEARN MORE.Ever stared blankly at the frozen pizza aisle, overwhelmed by choices? Finding the *perfect* frozen pizza can feel like searching for a needle in a haystack.Many frozen pizzas disappoint. They're either soggy, bland, or just plain weird. You want a delicious, satisfying pizza night, but picking the right one feels like a gamble. Finding the Frozen Pizza America's Test Kitchen recommends can be challenging, but we've made it simple for you.This post will guide you through the best frozen pizzas America's Test Kitchen has reviewed. We'll break down their top picks, highlighting what makes each one special. You'll learn about different styles, crust types, and toppings, so you can confidently choose a pizza that hits the spot. No more pizza roulette!Let's dive into the delicious world of America's Test Kitchen-approved frozen pizzas and discover your new favorite!Our Top 5 Frozen Pizza America's Test Kitchen Recommendations at a Glance Top 5 Frozen Pizza America's Test Kitchen Detailed Reviews The Complete Make-Ahead Cookbook offers 500 recipes you can prepare in advance. It's part of America's Test Kitchen's cookbook series, known for its reliable recipes and thorough testing. This cookbook helps busy people plan meals efficiently. It covers everything from appetizers to desserts, making it a versatile addition to any kitchen.What We Like:Huge variety: The cookbook includes 500 recipes! You'll find something for every occasion.Time-saving: Make-ahead recipes reduce cooking stress during the week.Clear instructions: America's Test Kitchen is famous for its detailed and easy-to-follow instructions.Organized well: The recipes are categorized for easy browsing.Reliable recipes: The recipes have been tested thoroughly, ensuring success.See also Best Kitchen Fire Extinguishers: Top 5 Review GuideWhat Could Be Improved:Size and weight: The book is quite large and heavy.Some recipes are complex: A few recipes require many ingredients or steps.Photos could be better: More appealing photos would make the book more inviting.Overall, The Complete Make-Ahead Cookbook is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to save time in the kitchen. It's a great investment for busy families or anyone who appreciates well-tested recipes. It's a winner for meal prepping! This massive cookbook, "The Complete America's Test Kitchen TV Show Cookbook 2001–2022," packs every recipe from the popular cooking show into one giant volume! It includes ratings for all the kitchen tools they test, and it's completely up-to-date with recipes from the 2022 season. Get ready to cook like a pro!What We Like:It has tons of recipes—over two decades worth!The recipes are tested rigorously and are reliable.It includes helpful product reviews, saving you time and money.The book is organized well, making recipes easy to find.It's a great resource for both beginner and experienced cooks.What Could Be Improved:The book is very large and heavy. It's not ideal for taking to the kitchen.Some might find the price a bit high.A few recipes might require specialized ingredients that are hard to find.Overall, this cookbook is a fantastic addition to any kitchen. It's a valuable resource for anyone who loves America's Test Kitchen and wants access to their entire recipe collection. You will definitely find your next favorite meal here! Easy Everyday Keto: Healthy Kitchen-Perfected Recipes offers 100 delicious and simple ketogenic recipes. The cookbook focuses on easy-to-find ingredients and straightforward instructions. It's perfect for beginners to the keto diet or anyone looking to add more variety to their keto meals. The recipes cover breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and even snacks!What We Like:Recipes are easy to follow. Even beginners will succeed.The cookbook uses common ingredients. You won't need to hunt down exotic foods.Many recipes are quick to prepare. Busy people will appreciate this.The photos look delicious and make the recipes appealing.It offers a good variety of meal options. You won't get bored easily.What Could Be Improved::Some recipes require specialized equipment. Not everyone owns a spiralizer.Nutritional information is not provided for every recipe. This is a small drawback.The book could include more vegetarian options. More variety would be appreciated.Overall, Easy Everyday Keto: Healthy Kitchen-Perfected Recipes is a great resource for anyone starting a keto diet or wanting to improve their keto cooking. It's easy to use and provides plenty of tasty options. We highly recommend it! Are you tired of spending hours in the kitchen? Does the thought of complex recipes overwhelm you? Then "Five-Ingredient Dinners: 100+ Fast, Flavorful Meals" is the cookbook for you! This book offers a huge collection of simple, delicious recipes, each using only five ingredients (plus pantry staples). It's perfect for busy weeknights or anyone who wants quick and tasty meals without the fuss.See also Top 5 Artwork For Kitchen: Elevate Your Cooking Space!What We Like:The recipes are incredibly easy to follow. Even beginners can master them.The meals are surprisingly flavorful. You won't feel like you're sacrificing taste for convenience.The book includes a wide variety of cuisines. You won't get bored with the same old thing.Many recipes use common ingredients. You probably already have most of what you need.It saves time and reduces kitchen stress. Dinner is ready quickly!What Could Be Improved:Some recipes might require slightly more advanced cooking skills.A few recipes call for less common ingredients. You might have to make a special trip to the store.The photos could be more appealing.Overall, "Five-Ingredient Dinners: 100+ Fast, Flavorful Meals" is a great resource for anyone looking for quick, simple, and tasty meals. It's a valuable addition to any kitchen. This book makes cooking easier and more enjoyable. This cookbook, "The Complete Cook's Country TV Show Cookbook Includes Season 14 Recipes," is a kitchen essential for fans of the popular show. It gathers every recipe and review from all fourteen seasons into one massive volume. You'll find everything from classic comfort food to exciting new dishes. Get ready to cook like a pro!What We Like:It has every recipe from fourteen seasons of Cook's Country.The book includes helpful reviews for each recipe.Many recipes are easy to follow, even for beginner cooks.The book is a great resource for finding new meal ideas.It's a beautiful book; the photos make you want to cook everything!What Could Be Improved:The book is quite large and heavy.Some recipes require specialized ingredients that are hard to find.The index could be more detailed for easier recipe searching.A few recipes received mixed reviews from viewers.Overall, this cookbook is a fantastic addition to any home cook's collection. It offers a wealth of delicious recipes and helpful reviews. While some minor improvements could be made, the sheer volume of content makes it a worthwhile purchase for fans of Cook's Country. This cookbook is a must-have for serious home cooks!America's Test Kitchen Frozen Pizzas: A Buyer's GuideAmerica's Test Kitchen (ATK) frozen pizzas have earned a reputation for being seriously good. They're not your average frozen pizza. This guide helps you understand what makes them special and how to choose the best one for you.Key Features to Look ForHigh-Quality Ingredients: ATK uses better cheese, sauce, and toppings than many other frozen pizza brands. Look for descriptions highlighting real mozzarella cheese, vine-ripened tomatoes in the sauce, and flavorful meats.Properly Cooked Crust: A good frozen pizza has a crust that's crispy on the bottom and nicely textured on top. ATK pizzas aim for this balance. Check reviews to see what people say about the crust.Even Cooking: The pizza should cook evenly in your oven. Uneven cooking leads to some parts being burnt and others undercooked. Look for reviews mentioning even cooking.Variety of Flavors: ATK offers different pizza styles. Consider your favorite toppings when choosing. Do you prefer pepperoni, cheese, or something more unique?Size and Servings: ATK pizzas come in different sizes. Check how many people each pizza serves to avoid buying too much or too little.See also Top 5 Kitchen Gloves Review: Best Protection & ComfortImportant Materials and ConstructionThe main components are the crust, the sauce, the cheese, and the toppings. ATK uses a special recipe for their crust to achieve that perfect crispiness. The sauce is made from high-quality tomatoes. The cheese is usually real mozzarella. The toppings are generously applied and taste fresh.Factors Affecting QualityOven Temperature: Following the cooking instructions carefully is crucial. Too high a temperature will burn the pizza; too low a temperature will result in a soggy crust.Cooking Time: Don't undercook or overcook the pizza. The cooking time depends on your oven and the pizza's thickness. Always check the package for the recommended time.Storage: Keep the pizza frozen until you're ready to cook it. Proper freezing keeps the ingredients fresh and the crust crisp.Pizza Type: Different pizzas have different cooking times and temperatures. Always check the packaging for specific instructions.User Experience and Use CasesATK frozen pizzas are great for a quick and easy weeknight dinner. They are also perfect for parties or game nights. They taste much better than most typical frozen pizzas. You can enjoy them straight from the oven or add your own toppings for extra flavor. They're convenient, delicious, and a step up from your average frozen pizza.Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)Q: Are America's Test Kitchen frozen pizzas healthy? A: They're healthier than many frozen pizzas because they use higher-quality ingredients, but they're still processed foods. Moderation is key.Q: How do I cook an ATK frozen pizza? A: Follow the cooking instructions on the box carefully. Preheat your oven to the correct temperature and cook for the recommended time.Q: Where can I buy America's Test Kitchen frozen pizzas? A: You can usually find them at larger grocery stores. Check your local store's website or call them to confirm.Q: Are they expensive? A: They cost more than many other frozen pizzas, but many people feel the higher quality justifies the price.Q: Can I add my own toppings? A: Absolutely! Add your favorite vegetables, meats, or cheeses after the pizza is mostly cooked.Q: Do they taste like homemade pizza? A: While not exactly like homemade, they are significantly better than most frozen pizzas and come close to the taste of a restaurant-quality pizza.Q: Can I freeze them again after opening? A: No, it's best to cook the pizza once it's been thawed.Q: What kind of oven do I need? A: A conventional oven works best.Q: What if my pizza is burnt? A: You likely cooked it for too long or at too high a temperature. Next time, carefully follow the instructions on the box.Q: What if my pizza is undercooked? A: You likely didn't cook it long enough or your oven wasn't hot enough. Try again, ensuring the oven is preheated properly and checking the pizza frequently.In conclusion, every product comes with its own unique set of features and benefits, and its value ultimately depends on your specific needs and preferences. We hope this review has helped you gain a clear understanding of whether this product aligns with your expectations. Remember, making an informed choice ensures you get the best experience possible.If you have any questions or thoughts about this product, feel free to share them in the comments section. Your feedback not only helps us but also assists fellow readers in making better decisions. Thank you for reading.[adinserter name="side left"] Photo: Michael MurtaughThick, pillowy crust sets this pizza apart, with balanced flavors DiGiorno has down to a science.The DiGiorno Rising Crust Pepperoni Pizza was one of our overall favorites. Among the only rising-crust styles we tested that actually rose, it came out nicely browned, with a voluminous, bready crust that was crispy on the bottom and fully cooked throughout.Whereas other crusts were overly salty or sickeningly sweet, completely bland or strangely spiced, this one was well seasoned, with balanced flavors. Even tasters who don't favor thick crusts noted that it tasted pretty good and supported a solid slice.The plentiful pepperoni slices crisped up nicely, the sauce had a garlicky kick, and the cheese was decent and generous. Though not mind-blowing, this was an ample, satisfying pizza that was greater than the sum of its parts. Each ingredient blended well with the others, making for a cohesive, tasty bite.We preferred this pizza to DiGiorno's Rising Crust Four Cheese Pizza. Without the salty, spicy pepperoni, the cheese pizza is overly sweet, and we struggled to get it to bake through when following the package instructions.Magic happens in this pan pizza as cheese and garlic caramelize and enrobe the crust.You get only a few pepperoni per slice, but we didn't mind.Authentic Motor City Pizza Co. frozen pizzas have a devoted following, and some of that attention is surely deserved. You can find these "authentic Detroit-style deep dish pizzas" (which are the only pies we tested that come in their own baking pan) at some Wegmans, Costcos, and Targets. They stand out for their crust style—not deep dish in the Chicago sense but more like a rectangular-pan pizza. This is the largest pizza we recommend, bigger even than the notoriously behemoth DiGiorno Rising Crust Pepperoni Pizza, so it's a great choice to feed a crowd.The thick, pillowy crust is ample and good enough but on its own is not noteworthy. One taster remarked, "It's not focaccia. It'd be great if it were focaccia. It's like white bread." But the magic happens in the pan itself. The crust is brushed with a garlic butter that, when combined with an excess of cheese, browns and crisps along the edges and underside of the pizza, which makes delectable, lacy, crispy bits that send this pie to the next level.The sauce is garlicky and peppery, with notes of parmesan and a pleasant, silky texture. The cheese on the Four Cheese pizza, a blend of mozzarella, Parmesan, Asiago, and Romano, was pretty neutral in flavor but melted evenly and covered the pizza well without overwhelming it.The pepperoni pizza is generously cloaked in part-skim mozzarella, but it's skimpy on the pepperoni, with only around 16 pieces on a pretty large pie and only a couple per slice. (If you want oodles of pepperoni, you might prefer the Double Pepperoni pizza, which we didn't try.)Tons of toppings are the point of Screamin' Sicilian pizzas, as their boxes boast "Piles of pepperoni!" and "Ridiculous amounts of cheese!"—and it's not all gimmick. The mountains of toppings have a suitable home atop a solid base. Holy Pepperoni is a maximalist's dream, with almost two full layers of crispy, oily pepperoni. Combined with the surplus of sauce, this pizza is especially messy to eat—shirt fronts, be warned.Bessie's Revenge, Screamin' Sicilian's cheese offering, makes good on its promise of generous toppings too, with a blend of shredded mozzarella, Parmesan, Romano, and white cheddar, plus a generous handful of fresh mozzarella slices, a rarity among the pizzas we tried. The browned cheese around the crust brought a nutty, caramelized flavor to the pizza. Some tasters found this pizza intimidatingly cheesy—it's not for the casual cheese eater. Get this pie if you want a rich, decadent pizza, with an emphasis on cheese.The sauce on both pies is tangy, pleasingly salty, and actually tomatoey, with garlicky notes and just a hint of dried herbs. The crust is no star, reminiscent of a thicker version of the crunchy, crumbly, almost cracker-like crust you'd find in a Red Baron or Tombstone pizza—but it's well seasoned and nicely crunchy, offering a balance to the oodles of toppings. The result is a canvas just good enough to let the toppings bounty shine. Photo: Michael MurtaughTrader Joe's Wood Fired Naples Style Uncured Pepperoni Pizza (about $6 at the time of publication)The Trader Joe's Wood Fired Naples Style Uncured Pepperoni Pizza finds a middle ground between the fancier and pricier wood-fired Table 87 Coal Oven Pepperoni Pizza and more-nostalgic frozen pies like our pick from Tombstone. One taster likened it to pizza they would be happy to snack on at a bar.Though the crust doesn't live up to its Naples-style designation—it lacks the dynamic texture and airy chew of an actual Neapolitan pizza—it was still among our favorites, with large air bubbles throughout, even in the center of the pie. Unlike most of the pizzas we tested, this one came fully cooked. It emerged from the oven crispy on the bottom and chewy inside, without any doughy, underdone bits to be found. But being precooked may also be why this pizza dried out quickly.The toppings were mixed—the sauce was a decent marinara, it could have used more cheese, and the pepperoni was standard, if on the salty side. This pie was best right out of the oven—we wouldn't want to snack on it cold.If you want cheese over pepperoni, go for Trader Joe's Pizza Margherita, which reminded us of slice-joint pizza, over the Organic 3 Cheese Pizza, which was short on cheese. Photo: Michael MurtaughIf you grew up eating frozen pizza, this pie will take you back, with a crunchy crust, chewy cheese, and a strong pepperoni flavor.Tombstone's Original Thin Crust Pepperoni Pizza was our favorite among the nostalgic, lower-priced, thin-crust options we tried, like those from Totino's and Red Baron. This pie screams sleepover pizza—delightful, if not wholesome—and does what it does well.The crust was crunchy but still maintained a slightly open, airy crumb—not dense, tough, or overly cracker-y, like others in this category. The ratio of sauce to cheese to pepperoni was spot on, and the toppings were evenly distributed over the pie, with pleasingly browned cheese, especially around the edges. Perhaps most distinctively, this pizza packed an extra pepperoni punch. On closer inspection we realized why: Little cubes of pepperoni are mixed into the sauce in addition to the slices of salty, smoky pep on top.We also tried Tombstone's Original Thin Crust 5 Cheese Pizza, and it was decent, but we missed the pepperoni-in-sauce magic.Where other frozen margherita pizzas hardly replicate the classic, Table 87 nails a satisfying—though sort of skimpy—bright, fresh pie.Crispy, curled pepperoni top Table 87's margherita-like base for a scrumptious, snack-size pizza.Table 87 is the lowest-priced option we found in the growing category of high-end, coal-oven-baked, flash-frozen pizzas, and it is the only one to meet our requirement of being widely available in stores.Tasters favored these pies for their simple flavors and recognizable ingredients. Table 87 has some of the best individual components of all the pizzas we've tasted, with a chewy, floury, crisp crust; bright, simple, tart sauce; and whole-milk mozzarella that tastes milky and fresh.The Table 87 Coal Oven Margherita Pizza was balanced and restrained, with ample sauce, just enough cheese, and a few leaves of basil that lend some fragrance to the pie, balancing well with the pizza's other components into a truly scrumptious bite.The Table 87 Coal Oven Pepperoni Pizza was slightly less successful. The pepperoni slices tasted premium, with subtle spice, and they curled up into delightful little cups when baked. But they didn't seem quite at home on the pizza, which one taster said was like a margherita with pepperoni on top. It was also dryer than the margherita pizza and could use more sauce. But if you like the idea of roni cups on a thin pizzeria-style crust, Table 87's pepperoni is a fine option.Compared with other pizzas we tasted, Table 87's pies are puny. A pizza might be enough for one person with a salad on the side (or piled on top, as one of our tasters found the Table 87 margherita to be begging for the insalata treatment). But to feed a pair, you'd need two pizzas or a couple of substantive sides to make it a meal, rather than a nice snack. Photo: Michael MurtaughA pepperoni pizza that doesn't skimp on cheese: Target's Good & Gather Self-Rising Crust Uncured Pepperoni Frozen Pizza (about $7 at the time of publication) was another self-rising pizza that actually rose, resulting in a browned, puffy crust that was slightly flatter than that of the DiGiorno Rising Crust Pepperoni Pizza. Though it came through on its pillowy promise, the crust didn't bring much flavor to the table. The sauce was tomatoey, sweet, and slightly garlicky, but nothing special. The sparse pepperoni slices were distributed unevenly and were too oily, with grease dripping off each one. What set this pie apart was the cheese: Chewy, stringy, and plentiful, it covered the pizza crust to crust. This pizza is a great choice for someone who calls in their delivery order with extra cheese.Tombstone-esque, cracker-y crust, but with whole wheat and whole-milk mozzarella: Newman's Own Uncured Pepperoni Pizza (about $7.50 at the time of publication) was similar to the thin-crust style of Tombstone but with higher-quality ingredients. It has some actual chew—the light, dynamic texture of a baked good rather than the uncanny crumble of a crust seemingly printed by a machine. Newman's Own uses 100% whole-milk mozzarella; the only other contender in this taste test that can say the same is Table 87 pizza, our most expensive per-ounce pick. Some liked the cheese, while others remarked it tasted like string cheese, but all agreed the pizza needed more of it. Some tasters also found this one too salty, with an overpowering dried-herb taste.If you want throwback, kid-friendly pizza but can't do pepperoni: Tombstone Original Thin Crust 5 Cheese Pizza (about $6 at the time of publication) could be the pie for you. The cheese version of our pepperoni pick left us wanting for those genius little cubes of pepperoni in the sauce. But if you want the same nostalgic vibe, this is still a good version of an inexpensive, kid-friendly frozen pizza. The sauce is a basic marinara with a nice acidic kick. The chewy cheese reminded tasters of cafeteria lunch, and the crust was crunchy around the edges and bready toward the center. This pizza won't blow anyone away, but it will take you back in time.A margherita pizza with a homemade vibe: Amy's Margherita Pizza (about $9.50 at the time of publication) charmed our tasters with its simple flavors and wholesome ingredients. The whole-wheat crust tastes nutty and has a satisfying chew, but it's more similar to a good homemade crust than one from a pizzeria. The sauce is bright and fresh, with chunks of tomato. The cubes of fresh mozzarella were very mild, with only a slight milky flavor. The overall effect was comforting to tasters who find frozen pizzas too processed. Green flecks of basil might put off picky eaters, but their bark is bigger than their bite, with only a mild herb flavor coming through. We appreciated the noticeable taste of olive oil in this pie and found it to be satisfying and clean, but like the pizzas from Table 87, it's quite small for the price.Pizza oven realness, underwhelming cheese: The highlight of Trader Joe's Pizza Margherita (about $4 at the time of publication) is the chewy, slightly charred, adequately seasoned crust, which reminded our tasters of slice-joint pizza. The sauce is bright and delivers on tomato flavor, but leans sweet and goes a bit overboard on the oregano. The pizza is topped with deli-counter-style slices of mozzarella, rather than fresh mozz, which makes us wonder why it's called a margherita at all—this is really just a cheese pizza. While the Pizza Margherita doesn't live up to the potential of its tasty crust or to its "margherita" name, it's still a serviceable cheese pizza at a reasonable price.The DiGiorno Rising Crust Four Cheese Pizza (about $10 at the time of publication) took longer to cook than the package instructions specified and still had a doughy flavor and squidgy texture even after extra baking. The cheese was fine, and the edges of the crust that were fully cooked were tasty, but we think frozen pizza should be a fast, no-stress meal, and this pie did not deliver on that front.The DiGiorno Hand-Tossed Style Crust Four Cheese Pizza (about $10 at the time of publication) baked more quickly and evenly than the DiGiorno Rising Crust Four Cheese Pizza, with a denser texture. The cheese blend had a parmesan kick, but the marinara sauce was salty, and overall, this pizza was middling, evoking chain pizzeria, hospital pizza, and bowling alley pizza for our respective tasters.We like the sweet, nutty crust and fresh, tomatoey sauce on Amy's Cheese Pizza (about $11 at the time of publication), but it didn't have enough cheese, and the pizza is small for the price. We preferred the more satisfying Amy's Margherita Pizza.We enjoyed the chewy crust on Trader Joe's Organic 3 Cheese Pizza (about $5 at the time of publication), which could pass for crust from a pizza shop. But because the sauce was overpowered by the taste of dried herbs and the layer of shredded cheese was quite thin, we preferred the cheesier Trader Joe's Pizza Margherita.Target Good & Gather Self-Rising Crust Four Cheese Frozen Pizza (about $9 at the time of publication) fell short, with a sickly sweet, under-seasoned crust, overly salty sauce, and rubbery cheese.Newman's Own Thin & Crispy Crust Four Cheese Pizza (about $9 at the time of publication) had a nicely spicy but sparse sauce and bland, tortilla-like crust. The cheese blend, a mix of cheddar, Asiago, Parmesan, and mozzarella, was nicely funky and tart in some bites, but powdery and acrid in others.California Pizza Kitchen Crispy Thin Crust Four Cheese Pizza (about $10 at the time of publication) had a disappointing, pita-like crust, too-strong oregano flavor in the sauce, and an odd porky aroma from the smoked gouda in the cheese blend that didn't serve the overall flavor of the pizza.Where some frozen pizzas taste like cafeteria pizza in a good way, Great Value Rising Crust Cheese Pizza (about $4.50 at the time of publication) tastes like cafeteria pizza in a bad way, with off-tasting cheese, oregano-overload, and salty, oily sauce. Though fully cooked, the crust tasted raw and returned to a mushy, doughy texture when chewed.PepperoniWith fewer pepperoni slices and a mealier textured crust, Red Baron Classic Crust Pepperoni Pizza (about $5 at the time of publication) was outshined by the similar but better executed Tombstone Original Thin Crust Pepperoni Pizza. But if you favor this style of pizza and your store only has options from Red Baron, it's an adequate replacement.Aldi's Mama Cozzi's Pizza Kitchen Pepperoni Rising Crust Pizza (about $3.50 at the time of publication) is a favorite among Aldi lovers, and we were drawn to the low price, but tasters found the pizza overwhelmingly salty, with a strange and overpowering anise or fennel flavor coming from the sauce.Costco's Kirkland Signature Pepperoni Pizza (about $17 for four pizzas at the time of publication) was well cheesed and covered in pepperoni slices, but the crust was bland and overly sweet, with a tough, cracker-like texture and a slightly acrid taste.The 365 by Whole Foods Uncured Pepperoni Rising Crust Pizza (about $4 at the time of publication) was among the least visually appealing pizzas we tested, with an uncanny seam around the crust as though the pizza had been stamped out by a machine. This crust—which had a dense, closed texture and doughy finish—was a total nonstarter.In our pizza shopping, we found that even tiny corner stores with minimal freezer sections had Ellio's Pepperoni Pizza (about $6 at the time of publication) in stock, and this nostalgic pick seemed like a great way to test a Totino's-tier pizza without having to stomach imitation cheese. But this pizza was unappealing, both visually and taste-wise, with sparse, barely melted cheese, too much sauce, a cloyingly sweet crust, and an imbalance of flavors that barely approximates pizza.In our first round of frozen pizza taste tests in 2023, we started with pepperoni. We wanted to assess the quality, flavor, quantity, and distribution of at least one topping across the pizzas we tested. Pepperoni was the obvious choice: It's common, a classic, and the one offered by most brands. In 2024, we sampled the cheese versions of our pepperoni picks, as well as a few additional brands.To decide which pizzas to test, we asked Wirecutter staffers from across the country to photograph the frozen pizzas available in large grocery chains near them, accumulating a database of pizzas in dozens of stores across 22 cities. We also used the "find in-store" function on pizza brands' websites. We only tested pizzas that were widely available, avoiding region-specific options, expensive mail-order pizzas, limited-edition pizzas, or anything otherwise hard to find in the average grocery store.We also noted frozen pizzas recommended by other publications and scoured Reddit threads full of opinionated pizza lovers. We looked at the most-highly rated pizzas at Target.com and read reviews.We set a price range of about $3 to $11 and disqualified pizzas (like ones from Totino's) that exclusively use imitation cheese. We focused on traditional crusts rather than outliers like French bread or croissant pizzas. We defaulted to rising-crust options when brands offered them, as these are relatively commonplace, and chose thin crust when they did not. We wound up with a mix of thin-crust, Neapolitan-style, rising-crust, and deep-dish pizzas.We tried 26 pizzas in brand-concealed taste tests with several members of the Wirecutter kitchen team. We baked each pizza according to the package instructions, noting how long each took to bake and any quirks or challenges. (Our picks mostly cooked true to the instructions, unless otherwise noted.) We examined each pizza frozen out of the package and fresh out of the oven. We took note of which were more or less appealing visually, especially focusing on cheese melt, grease level, and crust integrity and color.Taste-testers rated and reflected on each pizza's crust, sauce, cheese, pepperoni, and overall taste. When it came to flavor:We avoided overly sweet or salty crusts and noted when they had pleasant flavors, like olive oil or whole wheat. We sought out textures that reminded us of slice-joint pizza, or at least brought something nice to the table, like plentifulness, chew, or crunch.We favored sauces that taste like actual tomato, with bright, tart flavors that more closely resembled a fresh or good canned tomato than a bottom-shelf marinara. We developed a deep-seated vendetta against sauces that went too heavy on dried herbs, which can quickly overwhelm an entire pizza.We liked cheese that was fresh and milky, and we were pleasantly surprised whenever a cheese blend had a tart, tangy flavor or any notable cheese funk.We preferred pepperoni slices that weren't overly salty but instead offered a balance of salt and subtle spice.This article was edited by Gabriella Gershenson, Marguerite Preston, and Marilyn Ong. This is a members' feature.