

Pizza Pulse

Exploring the latest trends in the world of pizza.

Fried Pies

A Naples tradition comes to the American pizza capital.

New York City, ever on the cusp of the latest pizza innovations, has resurrected an old Italian favorite: fried pies. Two pizzerias, Forcella (forcellaeatery.com), with two locations in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and PizzArte (pizzarteny.com) in Manhattan, are offering a few options for those who want to go a step beyond the traditional bake. "Fried pizza is actually very new in New York City," says Dario Cipollaro de Lero, who owns Pizz-Arte with Bruno Cilio. "PizzArte serves Montanara pizza, which is first lightly fried for about a minute, then briefly baked in the wood-fired oven. The pizza is crispy with a soft interior—a different texture than pizza that's only baked—and completely greaseless, so it can be eaten with one's hands, just as they do in Naples."

Cipollaro de Lero explains that the Montanara comes from the poorest areas of Naples, where legend has it that the wives of pizzaioli would make the dish using leftover pizza dough made by their husbands. Not surprisingly, the Montanara continues the Naples tradition of simplicity; it's topped with only tomato sauce, mozzarella, Parmesan and basil. PizzArte's menu also features two deep-fried calzones—one with ricotta, mozzarella, San Marzano tomatoes and Neapolitan Salami, and another with es-

carole, pine nuts, anchovies and Gaeta olives. "The Montanara is a great seller; people are always curious about the fried items," says Cipollaro de Lero. "Americans love it because it's really light. There's no greasy effect—it's just a bit crispier."

At Forcella, award-winning Neapolitan pizzaiolo Giulio Adriani devotes a section of his menu to "Pizze Fritte," which includes a Montanara and two fried calzones: Ripieno Classico, with tomato, sopressata, smoked mozzarella and ricotta, and Ripieno alla Scarola, with escarole, olives, capers and anchovies. "The dough doesn't absorb the oil because I developed a special dough recipe for these pizzas, and the result is a taste like you would get with a zeppole," says Adriani. "The Montanara is my best-selling pizza, so it's been a great success."

And along with customer satisfaction comes media coverage: The pizzerias' fried pies have been mentioned in *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *New York* magazine and *The Wall Street Journal*. We suspect that, with all of the attention, imitators will quickly sprout up—in the pizza capital of New York and perhaps eventually across the country. —Tracy Morin



PIZZARTE