

• CAN PIZZA BE A • HELLTHY × CHOICE?

CAN PIZZA BE A HEALTHY CHOICE? OF COURSE!

Hands up, who wants pizza? If the findings of a recent report are to be believed, the answer is a whole lot of us! The report, from the US Department of Agriculture found that thirteen percent of the adult US population eats pizza on any given day and that this figure increases to twenty-two percent when children and teenagers are factored into the equation. While those statistics are based on surveys of US pizza fans, we're willing to bet that the rest of the world isn't far behind in their abiding love for pizza. Of course, these findings are great news for the pizza business, but what do they mean for the health of all those pizza munchers out there?

PIZZA: 1, NOROVIRUS: 0

Just because HELL awaits you, that doesn't mean to say we don't give a damn about your health. In fact, you may have noticed that we've listed the nutritional content of our pizzas on the HELL website so that you can make an informed choice about your food. It is one thing to point out that pizza made from fresh and high quality ingredients is not bad for you, but can our favorite food actually be a healthy option? According to findings by scientists at the University of Arizona recently published in the US Journal of Applied Microbiology, carvacrol, the active ingredient in oregano oil that gives pizza that special aroma we all love, can actually help to fight off the norovirus by breaking down that virus's protective outer layer. However, the small amount of carvacrol in your typical pizza means that you'd have to eat an insane amount of pizza to have even the slightest impact on the norovirus. Which leads us to...

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING?

It's possible to have too much of a good thing, so, while we're all in favor of the sin of gluttony, if it's carried to extremes, it doesn't leave much time for succumbing to any other temptations and, after all, effective sinning is all about good time management. All the same, if you're going to develop a spice addiction, we'd much prefer it was for the vitamin C-rich chillies on our Wrath pizza than the other kind. Of course, addictions of any kind are no joke and as the Recovery.org website says "If you have reached the point where you cannot quit on your own, then seeking out help is essential". In the end, how much of a healthy choice pizza is depends greatly on the type and the quality of the meat, vegetables and other ingredients used. In fact, some people say they would eat very few portions of the vegetables containing the most important nutrients, if those vegetables didn't show up on a delicious base of crispy dough, rich tomato sauce and tangy cheese. Even that pizza base contains healthy ingredients - the tomato sauce is rich in iron and vitamin C, while the cheese is a valuable source of dairy protein. Good news, unless you happen to have a nightshade allergy or are lactose intolerant, in which case, you can always opt to have either of these ingredients left off your pizza.

HOW FEEL-GOOD FOOD PROMOTES WELLBEING

While these recent studies have focused largely on the nutritional value or otherwise of pizza, they don't have very much at all to say about the ways in which eating and sharing our foods can boost our happiness levels. This is especially true when meal times are a chance to get together with friends and family, to relax, to catch up on everyone's news and simply to enjoy each other's company. Sharing food and spending time around our favorite people can, in itself, do wonders to boost our happiness levels. Indeed cheese, fish and chicken, all popular pizza toppings, are all recognized in themselves for their ability to increase the body's production of serotonin, thanks to their high tryptophan content. Whether you have it delivered to share on a movie night or go out to eat together at a restaurant, pizza is top of many people's lists as a food that's best enjoyed in good company. Perhaps that's the real secret of its place as one of the world's favorite foods.

Special thanks to Jenni Falconer jenni@calibri.org.

HELL
×