

Cooked at 1,000 degrees Celsius: Guatemala's volcanic pizza

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A pizza cooks on volcanic lava on the Pacaya volcano 25-kilometers south of Guatemala's capital

Guatemala's Pacaya volcano has been erupting since February, keeping local communities and authorities on high alert.

But for David Garcia, the streams of molten lava oozing down the mountainside have become his kitchen.

Garcia, a 34-year-old accountant, serves up "Pacaya Pizza" cooked on the smouldering [volcanic rock](#) to awed tourists and locals.

"Many people today come to enjoy the experience of eating pizza made on volcanic heat," Garcia told AFP from a rocky area that leads to the Pacaya crater, and which he's converted into his workplace.

In his makeshift kitchen, Garcia spreads the dough on a metal platter that can resist temperatures up to 1,000 degrees Celsius (1,800 degrees Fahrenheit), slathers it with tomato sauce, a generous helping of cheese and pieces of meat.

Wearing [protective clothing](#) from head to his military style boots, Garcia places the pizza on the lava.

"It's done, just let the cheese melt some more," he announces 10 minutes later.

"That pizza looks so good!" exclaims one of the tourists as the cheese bubbles.

Garcia's kitchen has become a magnet for tourists that work up a appetite climbing the massive volcano—one of three active ones in Guatemala—located just 25 kilometers (15 miles) south of the capital.



Rivers of lava have been streaming down the Pacaya volcano since it began erupting in February 2021



David García's Pacaya Pizza has become a magnet for adventurous tourists that work up an appetite climbing one of Guatemala's three active volcanos



David Garcia, 34, was an accountant before he set up his volcanic pizza kitchen in 2013

'Only' in Guatemala

He first started baking pizzas on the mountain side in 2013 in small caverns he found amongst the rocks.

"I didn't sell much the first few days," said Garcia, whose fame has now spread throughout social media.

In recent weeks, with Pacaya regularly spitting out molten rock, he started cooking the pizzas directly on the moving lava, some of which has come close to population centers.

It's a potentially risky undertaking given the plumes of volcanic ash blasted into the sky by the angry beast, to which some local villagers pray, pleading with it to desist.

"Having a pizza cooked in the embers of a volcano is mind-blowing and unique in the whole world," said Felipe Aldana, a tourist trying out one of Garcia's specialities.

He found about about the [pizza](#) joint on Facebook and thought: "I have to have this experience."

"It's ridiculous just thinking that you're going to eat something cooked on lava, but it's something that you can see only here" in Guatemala, said Kelt Van Meurs, a Dutch visitor.

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