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[United-States-of-Pizza-Michigan-Jolly-Pumpkin-143151.html](http://slice.seriousseats.com/assets_c/2011/02/20110227-138848-United-States-of-Pizza-Michigan-Jolly-Pumpkin-143151.html)]

[*Photograph: Runs with Spatula* [<http://www.runswithspatula.com/2010/02/bowers-harbor-inn-and-jolly-pumpkin.html>]]

Jolly Pumpkin may be better known for its excellent beer, but the company has restaurants at two of its three Michigan breweries. The menus at the two restaurants aren't identical but they both have pizza. Amy from the blog *Runs With Spatula* reports [<http://www.runswithspatula.com/2010/02/bowers-harbor-inn-and-jolly-pumpkin.html>] on the Traverse City location and calls her first pizza delicious and went on to say this about her second:

We also chose the Carnivore's Pizza and had goat cheese added to half of the pizza on the recommendation of our bartender. This artisan pizza is topped with sliced steak, pepperoni and bacon. Oh. My. God. This was an equally incredible pizza pie.

13512 Peninsula Drive, Traverse City, MI 49686 and another location in Ann Arbor; 231-223-4333; [jollypumpkin.com](http://www.jollypumpkin.com) [<http://www.jollypumpkin.com>].

The Chains

Domino's Pizza



Cheese pizza from Domino's [*Photograph: Adam Kuban* [<http://slice.seriousseats.com/archives/2009/12/how-does-dominos-new-pizza-recipe-taste-what-is-it-like.html/>]]

Michigan natives and brothers Tom and James Monaghan bought an Ann Arbor pizzeria called DomiNick's in 1960. Eight months later, James traded his half of the business to his older brother Tom for a used car. Tom renamed the pizzeria Domino's a few years later and set about building an empire.

In 1967, Domino's had its first franchise, which was in Ypsilanti. By 1978, there were 200 Domino's locations, which was an impressive growth rate but paled in comparison to what was to come. By 1983, there were 1,000 branches of Domino's, a number that quintupled in just six years. In 1998, Monaghan decided to call it a career and he sold the company he'd purchased for \$500 for about \$1 billion.

Even as Domino's grew as a company it was often a punchline in jokes about bad pizza. In a 2009 survey of consumer taste preferences among national chains, the research firm [Brand Keys](http://www.brandkeys.com/) [<http://www.brandkeys.com/>] found Domino's and Chuck E. Cheese's to be the worst of all national chains. As anyone with a television knows, Domino's used that survey to jumpstart a complete overhaul of its food. And that gets to the much more important question of how it tastes.

Well, Adam Kuban has actually done a decent amount of Domino's research for Slice. When the new recipe was announced, he went out and tried a couple of pies and [somewhat impressed](http://slice.seriousseats.com/archives/2009/12/how-does-dominos-new-pizza-recipe-taste-what-is-it-like.html/) [http://slice.seriousseats.com/archives/2009/12/how-does-dominos-new-pizza-recipe-taste-what-is-it-like.html] with the new sauce:

But somehow, the "bolder" part and the "medley of herbs" and "red pepper kick" seem to balance out any additional sweetness. If anything, the sauce seems less sweet than before—maybe it's just more balanced now. The "red pepper kick" is pleasant and probably just where it needs to be to appeal to a mainstream audience. It's not too spicy but still provides a gentle heat that lingers a bit after you've finished a slice. Good job