America's First Pizzeria

It probably won't come as a surprise to you that there are approximately 61,269 pizzerias in the United States. And, we consume around 251,770,000 pounds of pepperonis every year. *[I'm sure I'm responsible for a significant portion of that].* But, how long has this feeding frenzy been occurring?

Lombardi's is a pizzeria located at 32 Spring Street on the corner of Mott Street in the Nolita neighborhood in the borough of Manhattan, NYC. Opened in 1905, it has been acknowledged by the Pizza Hall of Fame as the first pizzeria in the United States.

Gennaro Lombardi started the business in 1897 as a grocery store at 53½ Spring Street, and began selling tomato pies wrapped in paper and tied with a string at lunchtime to workers from the area's factories. In 1905, Lombardi received a business license to operate a pizzeria restaurant, and soon had a loyal clientele, including Italian tenor Enrico Caruso. He later passed the business on to his son, George.

In 1984, the original Lombardi's closed, but re-opened ten years later a block away at 32 Spring Street, run by Gennaro Lombardi III, Gennaro Lombardi's grandson, and his childhood friend John Brescio. This change in location and ten-year hiatus surrendered the title of America's oldest continuously operating pizzeria to Papa's Tomato Pies in Trenton, NJ, which opened in 1912 and has sold pies without interruption since.

The relocated, reopened Lombardi's uses a coal oven to bake its pies the way the original did. It is unusual in not selling slices, highly popular throughout New York City. Only whole pies made to order are sold.

In 2005, Lombardi's offered entire pizzas for 5 cents, their 1905 price, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first pizza sold at its original location. *[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lombardi's_Pizza]*