



Rome's first pizza vending machine, installed in the Italian capital in April, has sparked reactions ranging from amused curiosity to outright horror.

Named Mr. Go, the 24/7 vending machine promises freshly made pizza with “carefully selected ingredients” in three minutes. The brightly red pizza vending machine, placed in a two-square-meter nook, is located a few minutes from central Piazza Bologna.

Clear instructions tell you how to order and you can even watch through small windows as the machine kneads and tops the pizza, which is offered in four versions, ranging in cost from €4.50 to €6: margherita, quattro formaggi (four cheeses), salame piccante (spicy salami) and pancetta (bacon), the latter in a nod to Roman tradition.

The pizza is prepared from scratch, mixing flour and water, then the dough is pressed and the toppings added. The pizza exits the machine in a box.

The result is a far cry from traditional pizza: the crust appears extremely thin, which is due to the fact that the dough uses deactivated yeast.

Some customers said it didn't taste bad, although most remarked how thin it was. Leading food magazine *Dissapore* gave a negative review, highlighting how the choice of ingredients isn't exactly top quality: the tomato was acidic, the origins of the cheeses unclear, just a vague “cow's milk from EU countries,” the toppings either burned or tasteless, and apparently there's powdered sunflower oil. And obviously, the pizzas are not made in a wood-burning oven, but in an electric stove. Ouch.

The pizza vending machine was strategically installed near La Sapienza University and Piazza Bologna, a gathering point for youngsters, day and night.

You still have to wonder how this enterprise is going to be successful in a country where food is revered and people usually take their time to enjoy their meals sitting down. Plus, Rome has plenty of *pizza al taglio* (pizza by the slice) joints, including the super successful *Pizzarium*, which provide good pizza fast at reasonable prices.