

edge, the crust is pinched into an almost pastry-like braid, sealed just well enough to contain that cheesy filling.

Just as certain city blocks contain the cuisines of a half-dozen different countries, pizza in Los Angeles doesn't conform to one nationality — it practically circumnavigates the globe.

There are South American pizzas shaped by decades of Italian immigration and Croatian pizzas forged along the shores of the Mediterranean. Korean and Japanese corporations have taken to testing their unique interpretations of pizza on L.A.'s international appetite. And some foreign pies defy classification altogether, labeled as pizzas by restaurants and diners searching for a simple descriptor. It's all part of the naturalization process.

A purist's definition of pizza might not apply among such diversity. Take for instance Guelaguetza's *clayuda*, which some refer to as Oaxacan pizza: a parchment-thin tortilla smeared with *asiento* (rendered pork fat) and black beans and topped with cheese, lettuce and slabs of meat spread across the tortilla like continents cast off into separate hemispheres.

Sometimes it's all about the sauce. So it is at Dean's Pizza in Long Beach, a true fusion that's part Thai restaurant, part pizzeria. Its parallel menus are mostly kept separate, but there is one notable intersection: the Thai curry pizza.

Dean's uses a red curry sauce redolent of kaffir lime and lemongrass that burns with a subtle, creeping heat. Curry pizza here can be constructed virtually to anyone's liking, with a choice of toppings (think pepperoni and pineapple) or without them altogether (the lactose-averse can order the pizza without cheese). Try reconstructing something close to a traditional red curry with a pizza of chicken or tofu and bell peppers.

However you slice them, these international interpretations of pizza, each more unexpected than the last, prove that in Los Angeles, the world truly is flat.