

PIZZA QUEST

By Philip Kelley

The Game

Pizza Quest is not so much a game as it is a simulation of real life. Practically everyone has gone through the pizza ordering process at least once: a group of people decide to order out for some pizza, and then spend the next hour or so arguing about what should be on it. Pizza Quest provides a set of rules that allows you to experience all the excitement, social interaction, and cutthroat competition without the hunger pangs or shattered friendships.

Pizza Quest may be run either as a stand-alone game, or it can be added to your own larp if you are running short on plots. If you add it to another game, Pizza Quest can be played either in character or (for a real challenge) as a “metagame”, outside of regular play.

Pizza Quest may be played with any number of players. Of course, with only two or three, it’s not much of a challenge, so be sure and drag all your friends in. A set of cards can handle ten or so players; if you have a lot of friends, just combine several sets.

Components

There are two sets of cards in Pizza Quest: 36 Topping cards and 27 Appetite cards. Topping cards list what you like or dislike on a pizza. Appetite cards indicate how hungry you are, and may give you additional goals as well. You may also find a clock or timer with an alarm useful.

Setup

Shuffle all the topping cards and give three to each player. Leftover Topping cards are not used.

Setting up the Appetite cards is a bit awkward, since the “Organizer” card must always be held by a player at the start of the game. Remove the Organizer card from the Appetite deck, shuffle the remainder, and count out enough cards—including the Organizer card—for each player. Shuffle these, and give one to each player. Shuffle the remaining Appetite cards and set them aside.

Do not show your cards to any other players. Of course, you may *say* anything you like about them. You may even lie, or make things up. So can everyone else. Such is life.

Advance Rules: Whoever is running the game may pick and choose what cards are in the decks before the game, to ensure sufficient angst and intrigue. Similarly, more or fewer Topping cards may be distributed.

Goals

All players want to:

- Get enough pizza to eat,
- Get the pizza you like,
- Get as many different pizzas that you like as you can,
- Satisfy any other goals or desires, and
- Make sure everyone ends up happy so that you don’t have to listen to them whine while you eat your pizza.

Play

Once the game has started, all the players must collectively work out how many pizzas to order and what’s going to be on them, while following these restrictions:

- Small pizzas have 6 pieces, and large pizzas have 8.

- Everyone has enough money to order pizza for two.
- The Organizer player will only place one order, and no one else will even consider touching the phone.
- If you don’t specifically *like* or *don’t like* a topping, you are indifferent to it (that is, you don’t care if it’s on your pizza). Exception: nobody likes anchovies.
- Garbage Pizza rule: Pizzas with three or more toppings are worth fewer points (due to diluted taste).
- Only whole small and large pizzas may be ordered.
- Each topping ordered for a pizza will appear evenly distributed across the entire pizza, regardless of what you tell the pizza store.

Time

Set an ending time for the game. If pizza is not ordered by this time, the store closes and everyone has to eat stale crackers for dinner.

In addition, pick one or more “Later On” times before the ending time. If a Later On time rolls around and pizza has not been ordered, everyone must draw an additional Appetite card and add it’s pizza quota (and goals) to their current goals.

Example: Joe, a fellow of inimitable taste, decides to put on a 15 minute run of Pizza Quest. He then picks 5 and 10 minutes after start as “later on” times. If pizza is not ordered 5 minutes into the game, everyone gets hungry and must draw an additional Appetite card. If they still haven’t ordered within another 5 minutes, they get even hungrier and must draw again.

Card Conflicts

If you draw cards that seem mutually exclusive (such as “meat toppings only” and “veggie toppings only”), tough! This ain’t no trading card game with a hundred rules and a 1-800 number. You’re a role player, deal with it.

Game End

When the game is over, everyone scores points. You get points for getting enough pizza, getting pizza you like, achieving any additional goals, justifiably not feeling guilty about others not getting what they wanted, and for anything else you can convince the other players is worth points. Whiners (players who didn’t get what they wanted) can deduct points from anyone they think screwed them over. Just how many points anything is worth is left as a topic to discuss while eating your pizza. (If you didn’t actually order pizza, well, there’s always those stale crackers...)

Designer’s Notes

Pizza Quest was conceived a long time ago, and only got developed after The Man himself smiled upon the concept. For this reason, I would like to dedicate this game to Mike Young, an inspiration to us all.

If sufficient interest exists, Advanced Pizza Quest will some day see light, incorporating a detailed economy, a plethora of crusts, a variety of greater or lesser stores to order from, and the dreaded Chinese alternative.