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Diana Coutu, whose beer-crust pizza earned her fame across Canada, is heading off to Italy as part of a Canadian contingent of pizza-makers.

## Going for a pizza the pie

*City chef on Canadian team  
at international competition*

By Gabrielle Giroday

THE Winnipeg chef who earned Canada-wide fame for her unique beer-crust pizza will now serve up a slice to judges at an international competition in Italy, homeland of the pie.

Diana Coutu, who runs a small take-out joint at 1119 St. Mary's Rd. called Diana's Gourmet Pizza, is the first official member of the Canadian Pizza Team.

The team will face off with other "pizzaio-los" from across the globe in April at the Pizza World Championship.

Three other members from across the country will be selected to represent Canada in events ranging from gourmet recipes to team acrobatics, where chefs don theme clothes and twirl pizza dough to choreographed music.

Coutu — named 2005 Canadian pizza chef of the year in a competition sponsored by *Canadian Pizza* magazine — attracted attention from followers for the unusual ingredients she used to win her national title.

After revealing she used Moosehead beer in her pizza dough, as well as whole wheat and honey, Coutu found herself the subject of unexpected admirers.

"I'll be walking in Wal-Mart with my husband and people will stop me and call me the Beer Pizza Woman," said Coutu, 32, co-owner of the pizzeria with her husband, Pierre, 36.

"People are surprised when they find out I make all that pizza, probably because I'm not as wide as I am tall."

*Continued*  
Please see **PIZZA B2**

## Pizza

Continued from page B1

Coutu and her husband have operated their take-out restaurant for eight years, tinkering with their ingredients and sending out a monthly newsletter, which has around 1,900 subscribers.

She's test run her ideas on her customers, and said the recipe she's most likely to use in Italy was originally served as a special in her restaurant this fall, playfully nicknamed Big D's Bodacious BLT.

"It reminds me of my favourite sandwich that I had as a kid, with bacon, lettuce, and tomatoes," she giggled, wearing a red apron powdered in flour. "It's kind of like having a salad on your pizza."

The pie features three kinds of cheese, as well as strips of bacon, ranch sauce, romaine lettuce and cappacola ham. Coutu's mum about divulging all the tricks of her trade, but she does give one hint to deciphering her recipe.

"We use low-fat mozzarella, because then you don't get pools of grease, but the flavour is still nice," she said, admitting she is "meticulous" about her recipes. "I eat pizza almost everyday."

Competitors in the international contest must be over 16 years of age, and will be chosen from more than 9,000 independent pizzerias currently operating in Canada. Costing about \$2,400 per participant, Coutu has high hopes for fundraising for the competition, as she plans to bring her husband along as a supporter.

"We met as pizza drivers at another company," she said. "I have a passion for pizza. Moosehead's my husband's favourite beer."

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