B1-B2 English Worksheet

Pineapple on Pizza: Why an Italian Chef Was Sacked in Australia

9 November 2026

Article

In Brisbane, Australia, a disagreement over pineapple pizza became a serious workplace dispute. Italian chef Davide Tamburella worked at a restaurant called La Costa when a customer requested ham-and-pineapple pizzas for a private event. He decided to turn down the request because he felt the topping insulted Italian food culture. He wanted to stick to traditional recipes, while the owner expected staff to carry out customer orders. It was not the first time this had happened: Tamburella had refused similar requests three times in four years. He would not give in, even though pineapple pizza is popular in Australia.

The restaurant dismissed him in May 2026, but the disagreement about food was only part of the story. Managers had other concerns to bring up, including his language and the way he dealt with colleagues. The chef also claimed that a workplace injury played a part in his dismissal; the owner denied this. Australia's Fair Work Commission later rejected his application because he missed the legal deadline. It did not decide whether the dismissal itself was fair. We must take into account that difference before judging either side.

Some commentators point out that the dispute is about more than pizza: restaurants must balance tradition with customer choice. Some believe a chef should protect the authenticity of a dish; others expect restaurants to offer what paying customers want. Perhaps the argument comes down to clear expectations. Restaurants need to work out which requests they can accept and how disagreements should be handled. After losing his job, Tamburella was able to move on to another Italian restaurant in Brisbane, where pineapple pizza is not on the menu. The story raises a bigger question: who should have the final say about what a kitchen serves?

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The reported dispute involved ham-and-pineapple pizzas requested for a private event.	
2	The chef agreed to make the pizzas after the owner explained the request.	
3	Management cited only the pizza disagreement when deciding to dismiss him.	
4	Similar disagreements about pineapple had happened before.	
5	The chef said a workplace injury had contributed to the decision to dismiss him.	
6	The commission examined all the evidence and ruled the dismissal was fair.	
7	Tamburella later found work at another Italian restaurant in Brisbane.	
8	The new restaurant where he works offers pineapple pizza as a speciality.	

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. turn down	A. introduce a subject for discussion
2. stick to	B. perform a task or instruction
3. carry out	C. consider something when making a judgement
4. give in	D. draw attention to a fact or detail
5. bring up	E. leave a past experience behind and continue
6. take into account	F. have one main cause or essential point
7. point out	G. refuse an offer, request or invitation
8. comes down to	H. continue following a decision, rule or preference
9. work out	I. stop resisting pressure or opposition
10. move on	J. find a solution by thinking or discussing

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. private	A. offended
2. insulted	B. conventional
3. traditional	C. genuineness
4. similar	D. well-liked
5. popular	E. refused
6. concerns	F. comparable
7. claimed	G. non-public
8. rejected	H. worries
9. authenticity	I. managed
10. handled	J. alleged

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. Do you like pineapple on pizza? What unusual toppings have you tried?	1. Should chefs be allowed to refuse dishes they believe damage a food tradition?
2. Which traditional dishes from your country would you never change?	2. Does paying for a meal mean a customer should always get what they ask for?
3. Have you ever ordered something in a restaurant that was not on the menu?	3. How should a manager handle an employee who repeatedly refuses an instruction?
4. When has a food combination surprised you by tasting better than expected?	4. Could a restaurant set clear limits on menu changes without upsetting customers?
5. Have you ever had to turn down a request from a customer or a friend?	5. When should cultural traditions be protected, and when should they adapt?
6. What do you do when a meal you ordered is not what you expected?	6. How might an employee's behaviour towards colleagues change how a dispute is judged?
7. Would you rather eat in a traditional restaurant or one that experiments with food?	7. Why is it important to separate a legal deadline from a decision about fairness?
8. Have you ever changed your opinion about a food you once disliked?	8. Does the story ultimately come down to food, respect or workplace authority?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T, 2=F, 3=F, 4=T, 5=T, 6=F, 7=T, 8=F
Phrase Match	1=G, 2=H, 3=B, 4=I, 5=A, 6=C, 7=D, 8=F, 9=J, 10=E
Synonym Match	1=G, 2=A, 3=B, 4=F, 5=D, 6=H, 7=J, 8=E, 9=C, 10=I

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	A restaurant may turn down a special order if it cannot make the dish safely.
2	Some cooks prefer to stick to recipes passed down through their families.
3	The kitchen team must carry out the instructions for a busy evening service.
4	She refused to give in when the customer demanded an impossible change.
5	A manager should bring up problems calmly before they become serious.
6	We should take into account food allergies when planning a menu.
7	Customers often point out mistakes when they receive the wrong dish.
8	For many chefs, the argument comes down to taste and tradition.
9	The owner and chef need to work out a policy for unusual orders.
10	After the dispute, the employee decided to move on to a different job.