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# Debunking the Myth of Recycling Greasy Pizza Boxes

## Description

Many people have long debated whether pizza boxes belong in recycling bins. Initially, it seemed logical to recycle them because they are made of corrugated cardboard, which is typically recyclable. However, concerns arose about grease from the pizza seeping into the cardboard, leading to the belief that these boxes should only go in the rubbish. Recent studies, however, indicate that pizza boxes can indeed be recycled. The American Forest & Paper Association published guidelines in 2021 based on research from WestRock, one of North America's largest recyclers.

The study revealed that while grease and leftover cheese can potentially complicate the recycling process, their quantities are generally too small to cause major issues. For recycling to be significantly affected, the cardboard would need to be roughly 20% grease by weight. In contrast, WestRock found that used pizza boxes usually contain only about 1-2% grease. It is recommended to remove any cheese, just as one would with other materials like tape or staples.

Despite these findings, outdated ideas about recycling pizza boxes persist online and in many local communities. Each year, Americans use around three billion pizza boxes, translating to roughly 600,000 tons of cardboard that could potentially be recycled instead of sent to landfills.

Citizens are encouraged to check the recycling guidelines of their local facilities. If the advice is still to discard greasy pizza boxes, residents could share the WestRock study and the American Forest & Paper Association's guidelines. While this approach may not guarantee change, it could help influence recycling facilities to update their practices. In the meantime, consumers can recycle their pizza boxes, either by ordering pizzas with liners or uncut, to minimise grease contamination.

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## Vocabulary List:

1. **Corrugated** /'kɔːr.ə.ɡeɪ.tɪd/ (adjective): Shaped into alternating ridges and grooves typically referring to cardboard.
2. **Seeping** /si:p/ (verb): Flowing or leaking slowly through a surface.
3. **Recycling** /,ri:'saɪ.kəlɪŋ/ (noun): The process of converting waste materials into reusable material.
4. **Complicate** /'kɒmplɪkeɪt/ (verb): To make something more difficult or complex.
5. **Guidelines** /'ɡaɪd.laɪnz/ (noun): A set of recommendations or instructions that provide direction.
6. **Contamination** /kən,tæm.ɪ'neɪ.ʃən/ (noun): The presence of an unwanted substance that can cause harm or pollution.



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## Comprehension Questions

### Multiple Choice

1. What is the primary material of pizza boxes?

- Option: Plastic
- Option: Metal
- Option: Corrugated cardboard
- Option: Glass

2. What percentage of grease by weight complicates recycling pizza boxes?

- Option: 5%
- Option: 10%
- Option: 20%
- Option: 30%

3. Which organization published guidelines about recycling pizza boxes?

- Option: Environmental Protection Agency
- Option: American Forest & Paper Association
- Option: National Recycling Coalition
- Option: Keep America Beautiful

4. How much grease do used pizza boxes typically contain?

- Option: 5-10%
- Option: 10-15%
- Option: 1-2%
- Option: 15-20%

5. How many pizza boxes are used annually in the United States?

- Option: One billion
- Option: Three billion
- Option: Five billion
- Option: Ten billion

6. What should consumers do to minimize grease contamination when ordering pizzas?

- Option: Choose thick crust



- Option: Order pizzas with liners or uncut
- Option: Order extra cheese
- Option: Request no toppings

### True-False

7. Pizza boxes can generally be recycled despite concerns about grease.
8. The guidelines for pizza box recycling were published in 2020.
9. WestRock is one of North America's largest recyclers.
10. Grease is the only factor affecting the recycling of pizza boxes.
11. Outdated recycling ideas about pizza boxes are widely accepted in many communities.
12. Residents should ignore the recycling guidelines of their local facilities.

### Gap-Fill

13. Pizza boxes are made of \_\_\_\_\_ cardboard.
14. The recommended grease threshold for affecting recycling is \_\_\_\_\_ % by weight.
15. Americans use around three billion pizza boxes each year, which translates to roughly \_\_\_\_\_ tons of cardboard.
16. Consumers should remove any \_\_\_\_\_ from pizza boxes before recycling.
17. The American Forest & Paper Association published guidelines in \_\_\_\_\_.
18. If the local advice is to discard pizza boxes, residents could share the \_\_\_\_\_ study.

### Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Corrugated cardboard 2. 20% 3. American Forest & Paper Association 4. 1-2% 5. Three billion 6. Order pizzas with liners or uncut

**True-False:** 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. False

**Gap-Fill:** 13. corrugated



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14. 20 15. 600,000 16. cheese 17. 2021 18. WestRock

## Answer

### CATEGORY

1. Business - LEVEL5

### POST TAG

1. ESL learning
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3. Level 5
4. myth
5. pizza boxes
6. recycling

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### Date Created

2026/02/24

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