

# Costco Wholesale Corporation



- ▶ Natural gas conveyor ovens
- ▶ Consistent product results
- ▶ Reduced labor costs
- ▶ Approximately 400 store locations in the United States

## Costco's Natural Gas-Fired Ovens Yield Perfect Pizzas

When you make and sell 20 million pizzas a year, you want those pizzas baked perfectly. You want them to cook quickly. And you want each pizza to be as good as the last one, and the next one.

Costco, which sells approximately that many hot pizzas annually at its 400 membership warehouses in the United States, finds that natural gas is the key to turning out a consistent, cost-effective product. Natural gas-fired Middleby Marshall conveyor ovens are ideal for dependably turning out high volumes of Costco's popular 18-inch pizza for hungry customers in store food courts.

### Conveyor ovens deliver results

"For pizza, there is nothing better on the market" than a Middleby Marshall oven, says Jay de Geus, Costco District Manager for Food Service in the greater Los Angeles area. "Middleby Marshall is a very reliable oven. It's a workhorse."

De Geus, whose district's stores sell about 100,000 pizzas a week, says the reliability of natural gas service is especially important in a region where electrical service may be stopped by brownouts or power surges. Natural gas is also less costly than electricity, he adds. In addition, gas flames provide precision temperature control, something well known by professional chefs.

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"Conveyor ovens in general are used for consistency of product and labor savings," says Nicole O'Rourke, Food Service Marketing Coordinator for SoCal Gas.

"Our ovens offer labor saving, speed, consistency of product, and, of course, energy efficiency," explains Lester Nowosad, Director of Key Accounts for Middleby Marshall. "We circulate air inside the oven so we need less energy to continuously reheat. It's a convection oven – it uses very high-velocity air that is focused on the top and bottom of the product."

Nowosad says his company's conveyor ovens work 40% to 50% faster than conventional pizza ovens and require no operator. One person can make pizzas and load them, while another unloads the finished pies, cuts them and boxes them.

"One of the reasons they like to use Middleby Marshall is that they can put two 18-inch pizzas side by side so they can double their oven capacity," says Nowosad. "We build a special oven for them that's a 40-inch-wide tunnel, while 32 inches is the industry standard."

Costco also favors these particular conveyor ovens because of their ease of maintenance, longevity, and resale value, according to de Geus.



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