

## A feast for vegans At Panarottis

Italian-inspired pizza and pasta restaurant chain, **Panarottis**, has been ranked among the **top three vegan-friendly franchises in South Africa** for the second year running. The annual ProVeg South Africa Plant-Based Fast-Food Franchise Ranking, first published in 2022, assesses the plant-based offerings at the country's top quick-service restaurants – and Panarottis has been in the winners' circle since rankings began.

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“There’s a definite shift towards plant-based eating in South Africa,” says Anush Lakha of ProVeg, “which reflects changing food preferences worldwide.

“Although the percentage is lower in the population as a whole, vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians account for a significant 10 to 12% of the local fast-food market, a market which has grown by 33.1% since 2019. This means there’s a trend-setting shift among young, tech-savvy and relatively affluent people, whose food choices indicate that the plant-based lifestyle is going mainstream.”

### A closer look at the numbers

ProVeg awards points based on **the number of plant-based mains, side dishes and desserts available to diners** – either as sit-down or takeout meals – as well as on the percentage of the menu these choices represent. Restaurants also score points for the detail given in their menus and for the presentation of the meals they serve.

In 2023, there was a **20% increase in the number of plant-based mains offered** by all franchises surveyed and a **23.4% increase in the number of side dishes**. And although there was a decrease of 20% in the number of desserts, this was because they dropped from a total of 10 to eight during the course of the year.

Only four of the 25 chains surveyed by ProVeg scored ten points and above, with Panarottis coming in third. And its score increased from eight in 2022 to 13.62 in 2023.

“We’re delighted with this ranking,” says Cornelis Schutte Chief Operating Officer, Panarottis. “Panarottis loves bringing people together over delicious Italian-inspired pizza and pasta in our warm, homely and welcoming restaurants. This means

we're deeply responsive to the needs and preferences of our customers and, when we saw the demand for vegan and vegetarian options increasing, we responded."

### A yummy vegan menu

Panarottis' Classic Pizzas come in a range of mouth-watering vegan options, including Margherita, Vegan Chicken and Mayo, Vegan Saucy Chicken and Mushroom, Vegan Vegetarian, and Vegan Sweet and Spicy Tikka Chicken. And the Gourmet Pizzas pile on even more flavour. The Vegan Al Capone is a traditional vegan Margherita topped with plant-based tikka chicken strips, red onions, cherry tomatoes and gherkins, while the Vegan Mexicana, also on a Margherita base, is topped with plant-based Bolognese mince, cherry tomatoes, assorted peppers, red onions and garlic. Even Panarotti's famous Monsterito duo pizzas are available in three vegan variants.

In the pasta department, the Vegan Arrabbiata and Vegan Bolognese make a grand showing, while a range of flatbreads & subs round out the menu. And that's not forgetting the Crumbed Veg Stack, a golden brown crumbed chicken-style schnitzel topped with spicy salsa, fresh avocado and a vegan mozzarella cheese sprinkle.

### The finest and freshest

"We prepare our scrumptious pizzas using a century-old method and only Italian 00 Stagioni pizza flour. This creates the perfect dough, which is proofed for 24 hours before it's hand-pressed by our master pizza chefs to create the lightest, airiest, crispest pizzas", says Schutte.

"We're big on the finest, freshest ingredients – and each plate of perfect pasta is skilfully made, using only the best 100% Durum wheat, which we import directly from Italy."

At Panarottis, quality counts and, as consumer preferences change, everyone's favourite Italian franchise will be adding even more tasty vegan dishes to its menu.

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