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Cain's Tax Mutiny

It is highly unlikely that [Herman Cain](#)—a candidate who admits he's *never* held office—will make the Oval his first. But whichever side of the soapbox (or pizza box) you favor, it's hard not to like him. Many discount Herman Cain, but don't invert [his 9-9-9 tax plan](#) into the [Number of the Beast](#).

When Cain intones that our tax code has become "[the 21st century version of slavery](#)," what tax lawyer can argue with his fervent imagery yet plainspoken truth? Mr. Cain may be guilty of hyperbole, but you have to admit our tax system has spun out of control. It's like a pizza on a centrifuge, with all the sauce and toppings spinning off to smack against the walls. It makes an interesting (if edible) Jackson Pollock, but it's still a mess.

Some have questioned the provenance of Cain's [9-9-9 tax plan](#), which proposes replacing our current bellicose, bloated idiot of a tax system with a 9% corporate tax, a 9% personal income tax and a 9% national sales tax. He argues that this simple plan would revive the economy and promote growth. Some project it would collect as much revenue as our current system, and that its simple ingredients would be easy for everyone to swallow. Like tomatoes, cheese and dough.



Image via hermancain2012shop

Some liken Cain to an early [Steve Forbes](#), who called for a flat tax in 1995. Forbes seemed to have done well (if temporarily) **because** of his tax plan, but Cain clearly was popular before announcing his. In fact, for all its catchy and clever mass marketing appeal, the Cain plan is unlikely to be palatable to vast armies of voters. Many appear already to be convinced that any tax with low rates will be regressive and hurt them disproportionately.

Still, it sure is refreshing to have a pizza magnate like Cain throw it up in the air, whirl it around like a showman and see what sticks Pollack-like to the wall.

Highlights of Cain's 9-9-9 Plan

[Herman Cain's plan](#) refers to these proposed tax code changes:

- Cut the corporate tax rate to 9% from its current level of up to 35%.
- Replace the six brackets of the personal income tax, which range from 10 percent to 35%, with a flat 9% rate.
- Institute a 9% national sales tax to fund the federal government (in addition to state and local sales taxes).
- The plan would eliminate the estate tax, payroll taxes and taxes on capital gains.
- It would leave these provisions alone:
 - Deductions for businesses on investments and purchases from other businesses;
 - Deductions on charitable donations, up to an unspecified amount; and
 - Deductions for businesses that employ residents living in designated lower-income "empowerment zones," as well as income tax deductions for residents living in those zones.

For more, see:

[Cain's 9-9-9 Math Raises Questions On Revenue](#)

[Cain's Catchy 9-9-9 Plan Draws Interest, Doubters](#)

[Cain Says To Throw Out The Tax Code](#)

[Herman Cain talks tax reform with '9-9-9' proposal](#)

[Flat Is the New Fair](#)

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