

For Dr. Culture's® Friends:

If It's Not Made Of Dog, Why Do They Call It "Hot Dog?"



More American than apple pie - this food "Links" the Americans together....

Sausage is one of the oldest forms of processed food, having been mentioned in Homer's Odyssey as far back as the 9th Century B.C.

Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, is traditionally credited with originating the frankfurter. However, this claim is disputed by those who assert that the popular sausage - known as a "dachshund" or "little-dog" sausage - was created in Frankfurt,

Germany where the "frankfurter" sausage would become the "hot dog" in 1487 -- five years before Christopher Columbus set sail for the new world!

The *North American* Hot Dog -- now credited among Americans as being an American food icon along with Hamburgers (from Hamburg, Germany and French Fries from -- *duh?*)-- most likely comes from a widespread common European sausage brought here by butchers of several nationalities (remember the huge influx of immigrants to the US in late 1800s and early 1900s?).



Regardless, these immigrants brought not only sausages to America (also called wieners), but also Dachshund dogs (picture above). The name "hot dog" most likely began as a joke about this small, long, thin German dog that resembled a sausage or wiener. Not surprising considering the Germans themselves called the frankfurter a "little-dog" sausage in the late 1400s, they linked the word "dog" to their popular meat treat. In the US during the mid-to-late 1800s, the name "hot dog" was also meant as a derogatory comment on German immigrants ("*here comes another hot dog*") in the 1800s. The origin of the meat itself was questioned (*a mystery where it comes from*) and today a hot dog is often called "mystery meat." Oddly, in today's US English language use, a "hot-dogger" is a great compliment -- usually for a flamboyant, show-off but highly skilled, snow skier; "*He's a real hot-dogger!*"

Anyway, despite roots that go back to the wursts and sausages of Europe, hot dogs are an American phenomenon. Indeed, a Coney Island vendor named Charles Feltman is generally credited with being the first visionary to fork a warm sausage into a split roll and offer it with the condiment of choice. Feltman sold 3,684 dachshund sausages in a milk roll during his first year in business.

So, when did “hot dog” first appear in print? One story has it that a US newspaper cartoonist in late 1800s drew a picture of barking dachshunds between buns and labeled them "hot dogs" because he couldn't spell "dachshund." The earliest known mention of the name appeared in a story in the *Yale Record* of 1895 in which students "contentedly munched hot dogs."



DR. CULTURE NOTE: Americans love their “*wiener dogs*” or Dachshunds -- even dedicating a website and blog to the four footed low-riders -- even holding a huge New York Oktoberfest for Dachshunds...could I make this up? These website features photos and even love *poems* to their beloved dogs:

<http://www.hotdogblog.com/modules/xcgai/index.php?cat=3>



Anyway, whatever they were called, they had become US patriotic fare by the 1920s. According to scholars who study such phenomena, hot dogs were Americanized through their association with public events. People ate them at baseball games, holiday picnics, horse races, carnivals, fairs and circuses, cooked them during camp outs on a stick, etc. Regardless of the history of this tubular treat, today, America now is the home of the Hot Dog. And, not surprisingly, there are two rival hot dog hotbeds of loyalty in the US: New York and Chicago.

One New Yorker declares, "In Chicago, they put an entire salad over the hot dog because they're embarrassed at the way it tastes." But a guide to Chicago fast-food says the New York dog is "a little limp wiener drowning in gloppy stewed onions and sauerkraut."

Regional differences aside, the hot dog is a favorite of Americans from all walks of life -- and non-Americans! **NATIONAL**

EMBARASSMENT FOR US: Every year on Coney Island, Nathan's Hot Dogs holds a hot dog eating contest. In the past, “Americans” have always won. But, Americans were stunned in 2004 and again (defending his title) in 2005 when a skinny Japanese kid, Takeru Kobayashi won the contest, consuming 49 *hot dogs*.



DR. CULTURE NOTE: The American English word, “Weiner” is rarely used when asking for a hot dog. Instead, “wiener” is used as a derogatory reference to an unpopular or stupid person such as, “He’s a wiener” or “Wiener Brain.” Perhaps most importantly for internationals to remember is that the word “wiener” is also used as a reference to, *ahem*, a “part” of the male genitals...It would probably be misunderstood if you innocently asked a female office worker if after work, she would like a wiener...or share a wiener with you, ..or, do you like wieners, etc.....yikes.