

Potato Chip Encyclopedia Article

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Potato Chip

The potato chip was created by a frustrated chef. George Crum, an Adirondak Indian chief and chef of the Moon Lake House Hotel in Saratoga Springs, New York, was exasperated by a customer who complained repeatedly that his french fried potatoes were sliced too thick. Crum decided to respond with an exaggeratedly thin and unappetizing potato. He sliced the potatoes paper thin, boiled them in fat, triple salted them, and then watched as Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877) sampled the chips. Much to Crum's chagrin, Vanderbilt loved them. In fact, customers began requesting them, and "Chief George Crum's Saratoga Chips" appeared on the menu the next day.

Crum's Saratoga chips became popularly known as potato chips around the turn of the century. In 1925, A. A. Walter and Company built the first potato chip production plant in Albany, New York.

In the 1960s, Proctor and Gamble initiated research aimed at producing better potato chips and introduced *Pringle's Newfangled Potato Chips* in 1969. These chips differed dramatically from earlier types, as they were made from potato granules that were moistened, rolled in sheets, cut into uniform bits, and fried. Because these chips were identical in size and shape, they could be stacked and packaged in cylinders. The Potato Chip Institute International complained to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that these new chips should not be identified as potato chips, and in 1975 the FDA ruled the processed potato product had to be identified as "potato chips made from dried potatoes."

Chips are also popular in Europe where people enjoy paprika-, beef-, and chicken-flavored chips. In England they are called potato crisps to avoid confusion with the English chips, which more closely resemble the American french fried potato.

Though there is an ever-growing number of snack foods available in America today, potato chips are still a favorite. In fact, almost 90 percent of U.S. households buy potato chips each year, and 11 percent of America's potato crop is used for the production of chips.

To satisfy an increasingly health-conscious public, many varieties of baked, unskinned, and unsalted chips now appear on supermarket shelves. In 1998, potato and tortilla chips became the first foods on the national market made with *Olean*, a fat substitute from Proctor & Gamble. Potato chips fried in *Olean* cooking oil contain no fat and only 75 calories per one-ounce serving, compared to 10 grams of fat and 150 calories in regular chips.