INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT DOUGHNUTS

THE ORIGIN OF DOUGHNUTS

The Dutch brought doughnuts with nuts to the New World, but the Dutch called them "olykoeks," which meant—not surprisingly—"fatty cakes."

A DOUGHBOY FAVORITE

Doughnuts became a big thing during World War I, when Salvation Army volunteers brought U.S. soldiers in the trenches of France doughnuts and coffee to cheer them up and to remind them of home.

HITTING THE BIG-TIME

At the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair—"A Century of Progress"—doughnuts were named the "Hit Food of the Century."

THEY CALL WHAT THEY MAKE

French dough fritters—slightly different from the circular doughnuts preferred in America—are called "petits fours." Which means "nuts' farts."

FAVORS YOU CAN’T PASS UP

Voodoo Doughnut in Portland—renowned for its far-out doughnut flavors—once offered doughnuts dipped in NyQuil. They also sold doughnuts dipped in Pepto Bismol and sprinked with Tums, in Pepto Bismol and Fal-Off.

DUNKIN’ LESSONS

In the 1954 Frank Capra comedy "It Happened One Night," Clark Gable’s character finds himself holed up at the way station Claude. Colbert lets his daughterlogo in his morning coffee. So give her a lesson: "Dunking is an art," Gable’s character says. "Don’t let it linger in your morning coffee."

HOMER’S FAVORITE

In a 1994 "Treehouse of Horror" episode of "The Simpsons," Homer uses time travel to go back in time and make doughnuts, which would eliminate both the need for nuts in the center and the problem with the centers not fully cooking. But because nothing is easy when it comes to history, Capt. Gregory—in an interview with the Washington Post in 1976—gave a third version of the story of the creation of the big nothing at the center of his mom’s doughnuts. Gregory told the Post that his mother’s doughnuts were a little too oily and greasy. So much so that they gave her, uh, indigestion. "They used to try all night around the edges," Gregory told the Post, "but when you had the edges done the insides was all raw dough. And the customers used to sop up all the greasy just where they bent, and they were tough on the digestion."

"What? I says to myself, ‘Would I a space inside solve the difficulty?’"

The internet fact-checking site Snopes did a deep dive on the topic in 2021. While Snopes can’t prove the first version of the story wrong, at least the timing checks out with the earliest mentions of “doughnuts” and “donuts” in newspapers in Maine in 1861.

We’d probably never know the hole story.

By Charles Apple  |  THE SPICYER HURRYER

Believe it or not—and we wouldn’t blame you either way—the modern doughnut hole was supposedly invented 175 years ago. Wednesday by a young sailor who soon became captain of his own ship.

The problem with this story? It has a few holes in it.

HANSON GREGORY, CREATOR OF ... NOTHING?

This is Capt. Hanson Crockett Gregory of Camden township, Maine. He’s famous for becoming the area’s youngest sea captain for age 19, which would have been in 1851.

But four years before, Gregory may have given the world a special gift—one for which he should be remembered forever.

Gregory’s mother, Elizabeth, sent her young man to sea with a healthy supply of deep-fried snack food. Fried pastries were popular at the time in New England—Blimpians, long johns, crullers, apple ring, duffnuts and fried cakes. Elizabeth’s recipe included ingredients like rummeg, cinnamon and even lemon rinds.

Elizabeth’s intent was for all the food to keep for a while at sea, and b) to be dunked in hot black coffee or tea.

The problem was that these doughy lumps sometimes did not get fully cooked in the center. So she began filling the centers with hazelnuts or walnuts. Elizabeth called these little lumps doughnuts. The most often-told version of the story says that 75-year-old Gregory would impale the snacks on the handles of his ship’s wheel. Which is admittedly ludicrous to begin with. And not very sanitary.

A smarter version of the story—and documented in a number of books over the years—states that Gregory had a steampunk—ah—round cutter that would allow Elizabeth to cut out the center of her doughnuts, which would eliminate both the need for nuts in the center and the problem with the centers not fully cooking.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME

American author Washington Irving is credited for making the first written reference to doughnuts. He wrote about “balls of sweetened dough, fried in hot fat,” called doughnuts or olykoeks.

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