

Food Facts Fancies

A Salute to Frozen Food History

(NAPSA)—The innovative thinking of Clarence Birdseye (1886-1956)—known as the father of frozen food—resulted in one of the most significant innovations in the food industry and forever changed the way people prepare and serve meals.

In the early 1920s, Birdseye, then a U.S. government field naturalist, noticed that freshly caught fish froze quickly in Arctic temperatures but tasted fresh when thawed and eaten later. The company carrying his name has led the frozen food industry since 1930 when the first frozen foods were introduced—26 different products, including vegetables, fruits, fish and meats. Today, frozen foods are a \$27 billion industry and Frozen Food Month in March recognizes the industry's accomplishments. Check out these highlights from the history of frozen foods:

March 6, 1930: The frozen food industry is born with the first line of frozen foods at a Springfield, Mass., retailer.

1934: Birds Eye introduces an inexpensive freezer display case that is leased to retailers, aiding those that couldn't afford the new appliance during the Depression.

1941-45: A tinplate shortage creates a greater demand for frozen food and large quantities are shipped to military personnel in World War II. Working women demand foods with easy and speedy preparation.

1944: National distribution of frozen food gets easier as the first insulated railroad cars are leased.

1946: The frozen french fry is introduced.

1948-49: The first frozen food ads appear on television.

1949: Frozen pizza arrives along with the first home dishwasher.

1950s: Consumer interest in frozen food brings a multitude of new products including fish sticks, baked stuffed potatoes, onion



Frozen vegetables were one of the first frozen foods introduced in the 1930s. They have become a favorite for quick-fix meals.

rings and waffles. Frozen food sales top \$1 billion.

1953: As television enters more American homes, the TV dinner is born.

July 1969: The popularity of frozen food skyrockets. Upon their return from the first moonwalk, the Apollo astronauts eat prepared frozen entrees and side dishes.

1970s: The broad introduction of the microwave oven brings food from the freezer to the dinner table in record time.

1980s: Birds Eye introduces custom cuisine, the first low-calorie line of vegetables and sauces.

1990s: With consumers increasingly on the go, demand for frozen meals increases.

1998: The home meal replacement category hits the freezer case when Chicken Voila!, the first all-in-one complete meal in a bag, is launched.

1999: Total retail sales of frozen foods in the United States reaches a record \$25 billion, according to the American Frozen Food Institute.

2001: Simply Grillin', the first line of perfectly seasoned vegetables that go directly from the freezer to the grill or oven is introduced.