

THEN & NOW



BY MIDGE NEFF-LECLAIR, PHD, HISTORY

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Almost everyone has a favorite food (maybe more than one), often connected with memories of special occasions or events. The Holiday season is a perfect example, but did you ever wonder where they originated? The breads we eat come from grains we've eaten for 17,000 years, and we have added salt for thousands of years

for flavor or to preserve our food, and brewed tea for millennia. The first baking mix, Bisquick, was sold for the first time in 1931. Chewing gum dates back to ancient times (as does pizza) and ninth century Arabians were expert distillers, and were the first ones to serve coffee as a hot beverage. Beer has been produced for about 10,000 years, and is probably the oldest alcoholic beverage, but wild grapes have existed for tens of millions of years—the oldest fossilized vine is dated at about 60 million years old.

Salt made civilization possible, since food could be preserved for ancient people to travel and explore. It can be produced by evaporation of seawater, or dug from salt mines. Salt is considered sacred in several cultures. Armies once "salted the earth" to prevent their enemies from

being able to replant crops. Jesus called his disciples "the salt of the earth" in Matthew's gospel, and good Roman soldiers were worth their salt. Once used as currency, the word salary comes from the Latin word "salarium" or payment in salt. Jay Morton Salt Co. supplies most of the salt used in the U.S., and began selling the familiar blue package in 1914, using the motto "when it rains, it pours."

The demand for spices like salt, pepper, cinnamon and cloves led to the quest for new trade routes, and new shipping routes were explored, leading to the "discovery" of the Americas in 1492.

Ketchup is synonymous with tomatoes, but not at first. It takes its name from the Chinese K-tsiap, a savory fermented fish sauce. The Dutch and

English sailors liked it, and tried to duplicate the taste, using walnuts, celery and mushrooms, (mushroom ketchup is still widely used in the United Kingdom). Tomatoes date back to the Aztecs in about 700 A.D., but it took European explorers to popularize them in North America, and eventually have them added to our ketchup.

Several cultures claim the title of noodle inventor—in 2005 the Chinese staked its claim to the honor when archaeologists discovered a bowl of perfectly preserved long noodles in the Northeastern province area of Lajia. They may have invented noodles, but that doesn't mean they invented pasta—what we called macaroni. Pasta comes from a different kind of wheat, durum, with a high gluten content that makes hard dry pasta with a long shelf life. The combinations

with various sauces are endless. Sicilian's claim they developed pasta, and brought it to the U.S. in the 1880s. Modern pizza is a circle of dough spread with sauce, meat, fruit or veggies, and topped with cheese. It is a world wide staple—and most countries have some kind of flat bread topped with oil, vegetables or meat. Ancient Greeks made circular dough "plates" they called Plankuntos. One of the earliest recorded ancestors of pizza is the dough that the foot soldiers of Persia's Darius the Great baked on the shields. The Persian soldiers put cheese and dates on their bread, and over the years olive oil, herbs, honey, pine nuts, goat cheese, meats, vegetables and other toppings were tried. Pizza was a favorite specialty of Naples, Italy in 79 A.D. The volcanic eruption that buried the city of Pompeii and part of Naples preserved a bakery

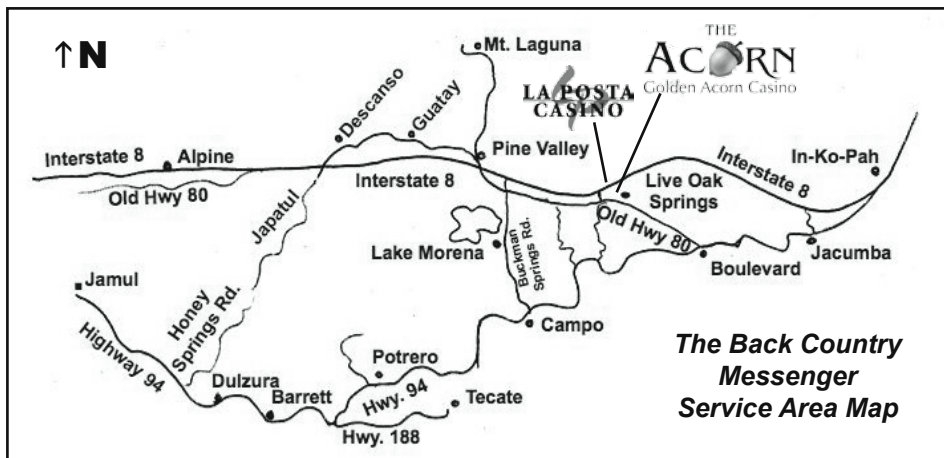
run by pizzaioli, the ancestor of modern pizza. Gennaro Lombardi opened the first U.S. Pizzeria in 1905 in New York on Manhattan's Spring St. Southern Italians brought pizza, pasta and pastries, influencing the way we eat now.

Soft or fried, corn tortillas are an unmistakable sign of Mexican cuisine. Maize was sacred to the Aztec people, and supplied their main source of starch as well as some protein and fat. Tortillas were made by hand from masa, and cooked on a hot surface for 20 to 30 seconds per side. Tortillas are used in tacos, enchiladas, and burritos. They now have 32% of sales in the bread industry in the U.S., second only to white sliced bread, reaching sales of \$5.2 billion last year, and are available across the United States.

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A Back Country Guide

To help you find your way around the back country



ALPINE: Motels, fast foods, restaurants, shops, health care, gas & lodging, historical significance, Viejas Casino and Factory Outlet Center, Post Office, churches, library, sheriff, fire protection, and community center.

DESCANSO: The Descanso Junction Restaurant, the Trading Post, Perkins Store & center, Camp Oliver, Historical sites, Post Office, churches, CDF, schools, and library along with a community center.

PINE VALLEY: Gas, restaurants, grocery, dental, lodging, County Park, camping & hiking, horseback riding, Historical sites, ORV area and U.S. Border Patrol facility, churches, library, Post Office and community center.

CAMPO: The Railroad Museum, Motor Transport Museum, Stone Store Museum, fishing and camping at Lake Morena, gas, groceries, Lake Morena RV park, the Malt Shop and El Rancho Bar and Grill.

In Campo the Campo Diner, Circle K, Trading Post, Mountain Health Center, Pacific Crest Hiking Trail, U.S. Border Patrol, ORV sites in Corral Canyon and along the U.S./Mexican border, churches and a library, CDF and Campo Fire, Post Office and community center. In addition, the Golden Acorn Casino.

POTRERO: The Potrero Store, Café 94, Post Office, CDF, County Park, library, schools, a Christmas tree farm, hiking, camping and a community center.

TECATE: The gateway to old Mexico; a passport is required to enter the United States through the International border.

BARRETT: Home of camping, fishing, and the best all you can eat fish fry at Barrett Junction Café.

BOULEVARD: The La Posta Casino and restaurant, Live Oak Springs Resort, camping, cabins, gas, liquor & deli, markets, library,

community center, hotels, Coins and Collectables and the world famous Wisteria Candy Cottage, U.S. Border Patrol, fire and sheriff depts. The "Sacred Rocks Reserve" is a live-in park that offers overnight camping and motor home traveler's spaces with full hook ups. Restrooms, showers, swimming pool, and many large oak trees and hiking trails are located within the reserve.

JACUMBA: The Hot Springs Resort and Spa, laundromat, market, Mountain Health Center, library, community center, park, glider port, and churches in town. Off the interstate is the De Anza Resort, a Subway and two gas stations.

IN-KO-PAH: Home to an equipment sales center and the Desert View Tower. The tower is a roadside attraction with gifts, shade, drinks, restrooms and a view for many miles.

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