

# Delicious accidents!

**Some of the most popular foods we eat are only with us because of a happy accident. So what's the unexpected story behind the creation of ice lollies, crisps, and chocolate chip cookies?**

## Ice lollies

In the UK, they're 'ice lollies' but the original US name for them is 'popsicles'. And the wonderful truth is that this children's treat was actually invented by a child!

It was a cold winter's afternoon in 1905. Eleven-year-old **Frank Epperson** was playing with friends on the front porch of his house in San Francisco, and made drinks for them by mixing flavoured powder with water. It got really cold, so the boys went inside. Frank left a glass of the drink outside, with the mixing stick standing in it.

It was a bitterly cold night. In the morning, when Frank went out, he found the drink frozen in the glass, with the stick still inside it. He ran hot water over the glass, and pulled the frozen drink out with the stick. It looked good, so he licked it with his tongue ... it was good! He made more for his friends, and they liked them too. Frank called them 'Eppsicles' but it wasn't until 17 years later, when Frank was making them for his own children, that he wondered if he could sell them. His children called them 'Popsicles', and when he began selling them in a nearby park, they were hugely popular. They were soon selling in their thousands. Two years later, in 1924, Frank got a patent for his Popsicles®.

He later sold the patent because he needed the money. That was a mistake – the Popsicle company now sells two billion ice lollies a year in the US.



Frank Epperson



## Crisps

They're called 'crisps' in the UK and 'potato chips' in the US, and you can find them everywhere. But there weren't any crisps around in 1853 when **George Crum** worked as a chef in Saratoga Springs, New York State. 'French-fried potatoes' were popular in restaurants, but they weren't like today's French fries. They were circles of potato, sliced and fried in oil, and you ate them with a fork.

One day, a customer in George's restaurant thought his French-fried potatoes were sliced too thickly, and sent them back to the kitchen. George made some nice thin ones, but the customer sent those back too and asked for even thinner ones. George decided to teach the fussy customer a lesson. He cut some very thin slices of potato, which became hard and crisp when he fried them – impossible to eat with a fork. He waited for an angry complaint, but ... the customer loved them! He ordered more, and other customers also asked for them. George called them 'Saratoga Chips', and when he opened his own restaurant a few years later, one of the main attractions was a bowl of crisps on every table.

George never got a patent for his potato crisps – but others saw the opportunity to make a lot of money. In 1926, someone had the idea of putting crisps into wax paper bags, and gave us the 'bag of crisps'. The first big successful brand of crisps was Lays, started by Hermann Lay in Nashville in 1932. Today, Lays sells over 1.5 billion dollars worth of crisps every year in the US.



George Crum



## Chocolate chip cookies

What Americans call 'cookies' are usually called 'biscuits' in the UK, but even the British say 'chocolate chip cookie'. It's the most famous cookie, and it was first made by accident.



In the 1930s, **Mary Wakefield** ran a hotel called 'The Toll House Inn' in Massachusetts, US. She was a great cook, and her guests loved her cookies. One day, she was making chocolate cookies when she discovered she didn't have any baking chocolate. She had some ordinary Nestle's chocolate, so she used that instead. She broke it into small pieces, and mixed it into the cookie dough as usual – the chocolate always melted in the oven to produce dark brown cookies. But the Nestle's chocolate didn't melt enough – there were pieces of it in the cookies when they came out of the oven.



Mary Wakefield

Mary tried one of the cookies and ... it was delicious! Her guests agreed, and Mary's 'Toll House Crunch Cookies' became a popular treat. After Mary published the recipe in a local newspaper, Nestle's noticed something strange – there was a huge increase in sales of their chocolate bars, but only in Massachusetts! They discovered that Mary's recipe was the reason, and asked if they could put it on all their chocolate bars. Mary agreed and received a lifetime's supply of chocolate in return! Nestle's later made bags of chocolate chips for people to bake with, and so the chocolate chip cookie became a favourite in America (3.5 billion are sold there every year), and around the world.