

SIX DEGREES of BACON

*Your Primer About One of
America's All-Time
Favorite Meats*

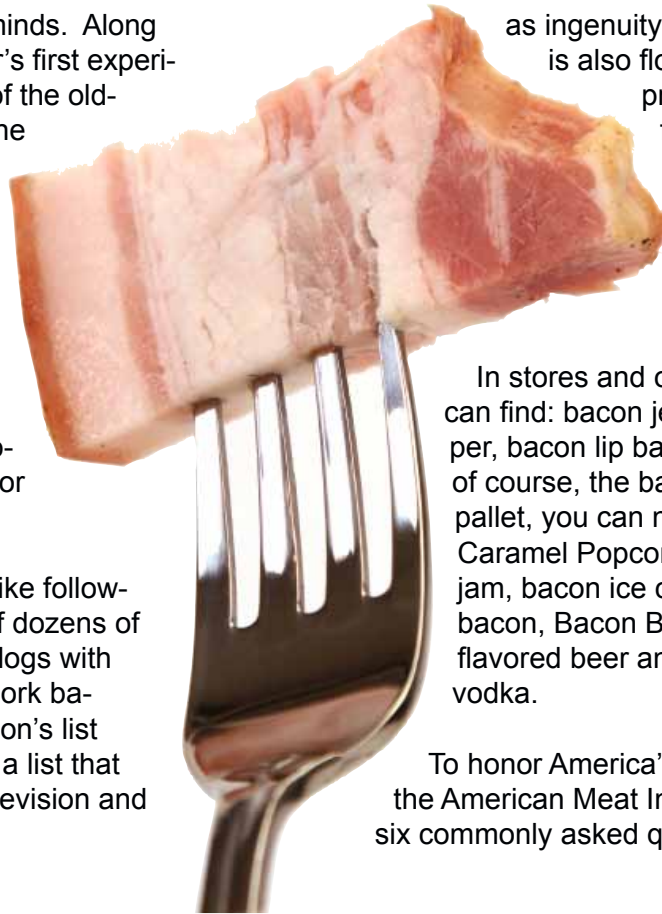


Six Degrees of Bacon

Bacon. It's known as the conversion meat that makes vegetarians change their minds. Along with hot dogs, it's usually a toddler's first experience with meat protein. It is one of the oldest processed meats in history. The Chinese are said to have begun salting pork bellies as early as 1500 B.C.

Today, the refrigerated bacon category is a \$2.1 billion industry, with volume sales up 7.5 percent in the 52 weeks ending January 24, 2010 – during the nation's economic downturn. And it's not just for breakfast anymore.

Bacon is enjoying an almost cult-like following these days. It is the subject of dozens of Facebook fan pages and bacon blogs with tens of thousands of members. Pork bacon is listed as #7 on JW Thompson's list of "100 Things to Watch in 2010," a list that also includes electric cars, 3-D television and Japan's first lady.



Bacon itself comes in as many forms as ingenuity will allow. But the market is also flooded with quirky bacon products that aren't even food. In the last two years, there have been almost 200 new products launched in the U.S. with "bacon" in the product description.

In stores and on the internet, shoppers can find: bacon jewelry, bacon toilet paper, bacon lip balm, a bacon wallet and of course, the bacon bra. To please your pallet, you can now buy Bacon Bourbon Caramel Popcorn™, Bacconaise™, bacon jam, bacon ice cream, chocolate covered bacon, Bacon Bits™, Bacon Salt™, bacon flavored beer and even bacon-infused vodka.

To honor America's favorite "meat candy," the American Meat Institute offers answers to six commonly asked questions all about bacon.

1. Where and When Did the Term "Bacon" Originate?

In the late 1500s, bacon or bacoun was a Middle English term used to refer to all pork in general. Around the seventeenth century, the English began calling the cured side of a pig, "bacon."

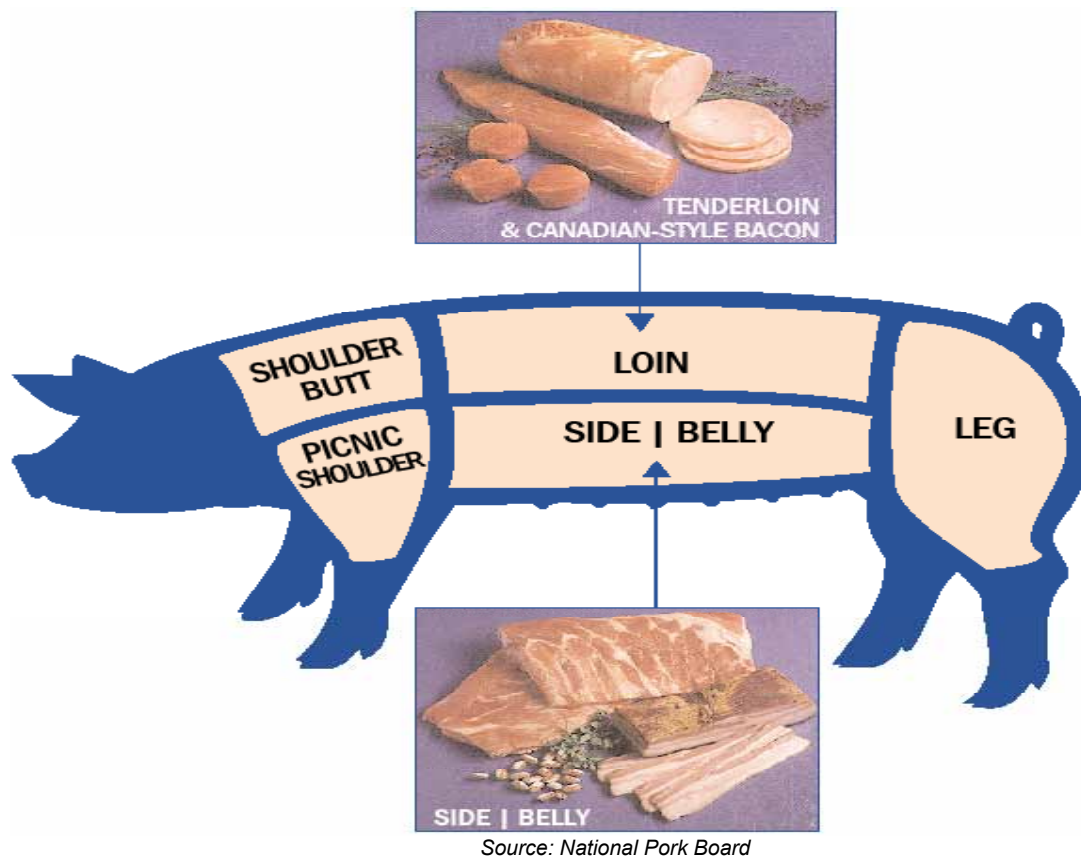
According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "bacon" as we know it today is derived from the Old High German *bacho*, meaning "buttock," "ham" or "side of bacon," and equivalent with the Old French *bacon*.

Before refrigeration, bacon was a staple in the diets of the Anglo-Saxon world. A little bit of bacon, easily transported, went a long way in transforming bland food into an appetizing dish, adding protein and other nutrients, as well.

In the United States, Oscar Mayer in 1924 introduced the first packaged, sliced bacon, for which it received a U.S. government patent.

The U.S. Department of agriculture today defines bacon as "the cured belly of a swine (pig) carcass."





Source: National Pork Board

2. Where Does Bacon Come From and How is it Made?

Bacon is a form of cured or processed pork (meat from a pig), but it is derived from more than one place on a pig. For example, in England, Italy and the United States the cut used to make bacon comes from the belly of the pig, while Irish and Canadian bacon comes from the back or loin.

In the U.S., bacon is almost always prepared from pork belly. The belly is first cured in a brine or in a dry packing, resulting in fresh bacon. Curing refers to a variety of food preservation and flavoring processes, especially of meat or fish, by adding a combination of salt, sugar, or nitrites. Flavorings such as brown sugar or maple are used for some products.

Fresh bacon may then be further dried for weeks or months (usually in cold air), boiled, or smoked. Smoking further flavors and preserves the pork belly by exposing it to smoke from burning or smoldering plant materials, usually wood.

Liquid smoke, a substance produced from smoke passed through water, is also commonly used.

A side of un-sliced bacon was once known as a "flitch," but is today known as a "slab." Slabs are available in the marketplace, but the majority of bacon sold today is cut up into slices or strips before packaging.

This bacon derived from the belly of the pig is known as "streaky bacon," because it contains long layers of fat running parallel to the rind. It is the most popular form of bacon in the United States.

Fresh and dried bacon must be cooked before eating. Boiled bacon is ready to eat, as is some smoked bacon, but either may be cooked further before eating.

3. What is Canadian Bacon?

Canadian Bacon, Canadian-style bacon or “back bacon” refers to fully cooked, smoked pork loin and is more similar to ham than U.S. style bacon.

In Canada and the U.K., the common cut used for bacon is taken from the pig’s back or loin, which is why it is commonly referred to as “back bacon” by Canadians. Americans, however, are generally the only ones who refer to this style of bacon as “Canadian.”

Like U.S. style bacon, Canadian Bacon is full of protein, but it is leaner and lower in calories.

It is used less frequently in the U.S., but is a popular item found on pizza, salads and breakfast sandwiches.



4. What Percentage of Bacon is Eaten During Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner or Snack?

Seventy percent of all bacon in the U.S. is eaten at breakfast time, 11 percent at lunch, 17 percent at dinner and two percent for a snack, according to NPD Group.

The appeal of bacon comes from its versatility, delicious taste and ease of use and preparation. Bacon can be broiled, fried, microwaved or grilled, and as shown in these figures, is popular at any time of the day. Because of its intrinsic taste, a little can go a long way in adding an intense, smoky flavor to any dish, salad or sandwich. More and more of the nation’s top chefs are adding bacon inspired dishes to their repertoires.

And with low-sodium, lean and turkey varieties available, there are plenty of options out there for those with specific dietary needs.



Bacon and eggs is a traditional meal that remains popular in homes and diners across the country.



Bacon is a popular topping for salads, whether simply crumbled or as part of a hot salad dressing.

5. What are the Top-Selling Bacon Brands?

| Brand | Volume Sales | Unit Sales (in millions) | Dollar Sales (in millions) |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Private Label | 167.7 | 174.3 | 505.3 |
| 2. Oscar Mayer | 88.2 | 114.4 | 423.9 |
| 3. Hormel Black Label | 33.6 | 34.6 | 117.1 |
| 4. Farmland | 23.4 | 23 | 70.7 |
| 5. Wright | 23 | 11 | 73.7 |
| 6. Bar S | 22 | 26.5 | 61.1 |
| 7. Smithfield | 22 | 22.5 | 65.2 |
| 8. Gwaltney | 19.5 | 22.7 | 58.6 |
| 9. Plumrose | 15.7 | 15.2 | 42.8 |
| 10. Tyson | 13.1 | 16.9 | 48.6 |
| 11. Louis Rich | 13 | 17.4 | 52.7 |
| 12. John Morell | 11.9 | 12.9 | 34.3 |
| 13. Farmer John | 11 | 11.1 | 39.6 |
| 14. Sugardale | 9.4 | 10.2 | 29.2 |
| 15. Jimmy Dean | 9.4 | 12.6 | 35 |
| 16. Corn King | 7.9 | 8.5 | 18.7 |
| 17. Carolina Pride | 6.8 | 9 | 19.2 |
| 18. Butterball | 6.7 | 11.7 | 25 |
| 19. Hormel | 5.3 | 13 | 55.5 |
| 20. Jones | 1.7 | 4.3 | 17.2 |
| | | | |
| Total Category | 613 | 681.4 | 2,127.5 |

TOTAL U.S. – Supermarkets, Drugstores, and Mass Merchandise Outlets (excluding Wal-Mart)

Source: Infoscan Reviews, Information Resources, Inc. (IRI).

Latest 52 Weeks Ending Apr. 18, 2010

6. What are the Top 10 Bacon Consuming Markets in the United States?



1. New York, N.Y.
2. Los Angeles, Calif.
3. San Antonio/Corpus Christi, Texas
4. Baltimore/Washington, D.C.
5. Chicago, Ill.
6. Philadelphia, Penn.
7. Houston, Texas
8. South Carolina
9. Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas
10. Atlanta, Ga.

The American Meat Institute (AMI) represents the interests of packers and processors of beef, pork, lamb, veal and turkey products and their suppliers throughout North America. Together, AMI's members produce 95 percent of the beef, pork, lamb and veal products and 70 percent of the turkey products in the United States. The Institute provides legislative, regulatory, public relations, technical, scientific and educational services to the meat and poultry packing and processing industry.

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