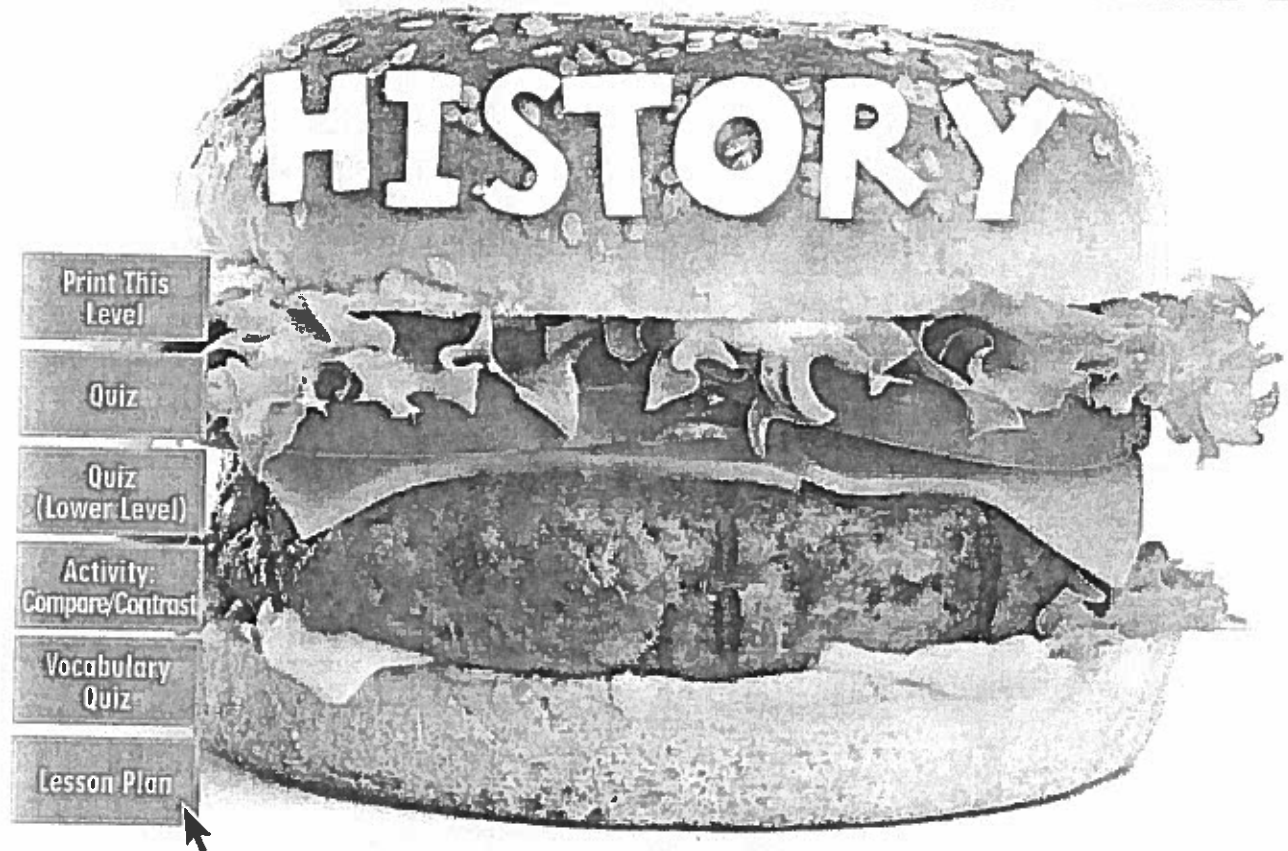


HAMBURGER

HISTORY



How a lump of meat became America's most popular food

BY LAUREN TARSHIS

CLICK WORDS FOR MORE

VOCABULARY

spatula: a cooking tool with a wide, flat part for lifting or turning food

immigrants: people who have come to a new country to live

contained: included, was made of or with

border: the outer edge of a country or state

founded: created, started

Vocab Slide Show

What's more American than a juicy hamburger? We eat nearly 50 billion of them every year. You'll find burgers on menus everywhere.

Who invented this popular food?

Early in the 20th century, at a diner in Wichita, Kansas, Walter Anderson was panicking. Anderson was working in the kitchen during lunchtime. Hungry customers were waiting for their food. They were getting impatient, and the food was taking too long to cook.

Anderson stared at a meatball sitting on the grill. It wasn't cooking quickly enough. Anderson angrily hit the meatball with his **spatula**. Whack! The round meatball flattened into a disc. Minutes

later, it was done. The hamburger was born.

Or was it?



PAUSE AND THINK: Why did Walter Anderson create his first hamburger?

Unhealthy Ground Beef

Many people, like Anderson, have claimed they invented the hamburger—but experts in food history say it wasn't invented by one person alone. The recipe probably has its roots in Germany, a country famous for its sausages and other ground meats.

In the 1800s, millions of Germans came to the U.S. These **immigrants** missed the food from their home country. They found that ground beef was inexpensive in America, and German factory workers in cities like Chicago ate the beef on sliced rolls. The meal reminded them of home.

Soon enough, the food got a name: It was called the Hamburg steak, after the German city of Hamburg.

However, the Hamburg steak was popular only in German neighborhoods. In the 1800s, many Americans mistrusted ground beef, because dishonest butchers sold unhealthy beef that **contained** spoiled meat and fat scraps. Most



The first White Castle restaurant opened in 1921.

people avoided this meat.

But that was about to change.



PAUSE AND THINK: Why wasn't ground beef popular in the U.S. in the 1800s?

A Clean Kitchen

In 1921, Anderson teamed up with a businessman named Billy Ingram. The men wanted to open a restaurant that was known for its hamburgers—but first, they needed to change Americans' perceptions of ground beef.

The men allowed customers to see the kitchen and watch workers cook the hamburgers. Anderson and Ingram created advertisements to show that the restaurant was clean and the ground beef was wholesome.

The men named their restaurant White Castle to convey the idea that it was immaculate and fit for a king—and the plan worked.

By the 1950s, the hamburger was the most popular food in America. Today, fast-food restaurants like White Castle and McDonald's have had tremendous success, earning billions of dollars with their hamburgers. Even if Anderson didn't really invent the hamburger, he certainly deserves credit for making it famous.

Some people predict that the hamburger's popularity will decline because Americans are starting to eat healthier. Sales at fast-food restaurants are already beginning to drop.

For now, though, the burger remains America's favorite food. •



PAUSE AND THINK: How did Anderson and Ingram make burgers popular?

STILL HUNGRY?
Turn the page to read about another American favorite!



How a Mexican food became an American classic

It was 1951 in San Bernardino, California. Glen Bell was grilling up burgers and hot dogs at his food stand, Bell's Drive-In.

For weeks, Bell had been watching the restaurant named Mitla Café across the street. Bell's place had plenty of customers, but Mitla's was packed. During lunchtime, customers were usually lined up around the corner waiting for a table.

Finally, Bell decided to see what all the excitement was about. He stood in line at Mitla's, the only white customer in a crowd of mostly Mexican immigrants. Bell was served the house specialty: a taco. Few non-Hispanic Americans had ever tasted this Mexican treat—a fried corn tortilla stuffed with meat, cheese, and a spicy tomato sauce.

Bell inhaled the delicious scent of the taco. He took his first bite. *Crunch.* Bell almost fell off his chair in ecstasy. He loved it! Not only

did Bell discover his new favorite food, he also tasted his future.



PAUSE AND THINK: Why did Glen Bell decide to try the food at Mitla's?

A Taste of Mexico

California shares a **border** with Mexico. For decades, Mexican immigrants had been coming into Southern California, bringing recipes for their favorite foods with them.

By the 1950s, many small establishments like Mitla's were serving up tacos and other dishes for Mexicans longing for a taste of home.

Non-Hispanic Americans rarely patronized Mexican restaurants. Most Americans weren't adventurous eaters. They worried that Mexican food would be too spicy or cause indigestion. But Bell thought Americans might be ready to try something new.



Glen Bell with his wife, Martha



And was the taco really so unusual? Americans already used ground beef in their burgers. And wasn't the taco shell a bit like a hamburger bun?

Bell wanted more Americans to sample tacos, so he decided to open his own taco restaurant. Bell's first challenge was to speed up the process of making tacos to satisfy the American craze for fast food. Preparing the beef was easy—but each taco shell had to be fried right before serving, or else it would become soggy.

Bell worked in his kitchen to make the taco shell crispier, and he created a taco sauce that was not too spicy. He made his taco restaurant more like a fast-food restaurant and less like a taco stand.

Bell's first taco restaurant, Taco Tia, opened in 1954 and was an immediate success. As Bell had predicted, most of his customers loved the fast-food version of tacos. Within a year, Bell opened two more restaurants. By 1962, he had sold Taco Tia and **founded** the fast-food chain Taco Bell. Today, there are more than 5,500 Taco Bell restaurants in the United States.

Bell succeeded in introducing Mexican food to picky American eaters—and he helped make the taco as popular in the U.S. as apple pie. •



PAUSE AND THINK: How did Bell persuade Americans to try tacos?



Burgers vs. Tacos



How are these two foods alike in some ways and different in others?

WHAT TO DO: Complete the sentences below using examples from the text.

1. Burgers and tacos are alike because

(Hint: What ingredient is in both foods?)

2. Burgers and tacos are different because

(Hint: Each food started out in a different country. Where did they come from?)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Paired Texts Vocabulary Review

Directions: Reread the vocabulary definitions on page 26. Then choose the best word from the Word Bank to complete each sentence.

WORD BANK	border	contained	founded	immigrants	spatula
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1. Mexican _____ brought tacos to America.
2. Glen Bell _____ Taco Tia because he thought Americans were ready for something new.
3. There's a lot of food in California that comes from Mexico because the two places share a _____.
4. Walter Anderson used his _____ to flatten a meatball.
5. Butchers used to sell meat that _____ gross and unhealthy ingredients.

Now that you remember what each word means, pick the correct word for each sentence starter, and write it in the box. Then use your own words to complete each sentence.

6. You'll need this if you're going to cook _____

7. If I had known that cake so much sugar, I would have _____

8. The minute we went over the into Mexico, we stopped to eat _____

9. We are lucky that have brought delicious recipes to America, such as _____

10. My friend and I the cooking club at school because we wanted to _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Paired Texts Quiz

Directions: Fill in the bubble next to the best answer for questions 1-6. Write in your answer for questions 7-8.

- The articles "Hamburger History" and "Tacos Take Over" are both about _____.
 (A) bread
 (B) clean kitchens
 (C) food
 (D) Germany
- Walter Anderson created his first hamburger because he _____.
 (A) wanted to get rich
 (B) was hungry
 (C) was born in Germany
 (D) wanted a meatball to cook faster
- German immigrants in America ate ground beef because _____.
 (A) they missed the food from Germany
 (B) they worked in factories
 (C) it was named after Hamburg, Germany
 (D) it cooked quickly
- Which TWO phrases in the article help show that Anderson and Bell made burgers and tacos very popular among Americans?
 (A) "By the 1950s, the hamburger was the most popular food in America."
 (B) "Few non-Hispanic Americans had ever tasted this Mexican treat."
 (C) "... there are more than 5,500 Taco Bell restaurants in the U.S."
 (D) "... the restaurant was spotless and fit for a king."
- The author, Lauren Tarshis, writes that when Glen Bell tasted his first taco, he "tasted his future." What does Tarshis mean?
 (A) Bell later built a career around tacos.
 (B) Most Americans were not bold eaters.
 (C) Bell sped up the process of making tacos.
 (D) Bell ate tacos every day afterward.
- What can you infer, or tell from clues in the text, about the time in which Glen Bell lived?
 (A) Americans traveled to Mexico often.
 (B) Most Americans ate fairly plain food.
 (C) Many German people visited California.
 (D) Americans were not very hungry.
- The author notes that in the 1800s, many butchers sold bad ground meat. What makes this detail important to the article?

- What role did immigrants play in making burgers and tacos popular in America?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Compare and Contrast

Directions: Answer the questions below for both hamburgers and tacos. Then check the correct box to show whether the answers are similar or different.

	Hamburgers	Tacos	Similar	Different
What group of people first made and ate this food in America?				
Why did most Americans stay away from this food at first?				
Who made this food popular in America?				
Was the food changed so that Americans would like it? If so, how?				
Is the food still popular today?				

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