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## HISTORY OF THE HOT DOG

Sausage is one of the oldest forms of processed food, having been mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey* as far back as the 9th Century B.C.

Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, is traditionally credited with originating the frankfurter. However, this claim is disputed by those who assert that the popular sausage - known as a "dachshund" or "little-dog" sausage - was created in the late 1600's by Johann Georghehner, a butcher, living in Coburg, Germany. According to this report, Georghehner later traveled to Frankfurt to promote his new product.

In 1987, the city of Frankfurt celebrated the 500th birthday of the hot dog in that city. It's said that the frankfurter was developed there in 1487, five years before Christopher Columbus set sail for the new world. The people of Vienna (Wien), Austria, point to the term "wiener" to prove their claim as the birthplace of the hot dog.

As it turns out, it is likely that the North American hot dog comes from a widespread common European sausage brought here by butchers of several nationalities. Also in doubt is who first served the dachshund sausage with a roll. One report says a German immigrant sold them, along with milk rolls and sauerkraut, from a push cart in New York City's Bowery during the 1860's. In 1871, Charles Feltman, a German butcher opened up the first Coney Island hot dog stand selling 3,684 dachshund sausages in a milk roll during his first year in business.

The year, 1893, was an important date in hot dog history. In Chicago that year, the Colombian Exposition brought hordes of visitors who consumed large quantities of sausages sold by vendors. People liked this food that was easy to eat, convenient and inexpensive. Hot dog historian Bruce Kraig, Ph.D., retired professor emeritus at Roosevelt University, says the Germans always ate the dachshund sausages with bread. Since the sausage culture is German, it is likely that Germans introduced the practice of eating the dachshund sausages, which we today know as the hot dog, nestled in a bun.

Also in 1893, sausages became the standard fare at baseball parks. This tradition is believed to have been started by a St. Louis bar owner, Chris Von de Ahe, a German immigrant who also owned the St. Louis Browns major league baseball team.

Many hot dog historians chafe at the suggestion that today's hot dog on a bun was introduced during the St. Louis "Louisiana Purchase Exposition" in 1904 by Bavarian concessionaire, Anton Feuchtwanger. As the story goes, he loaned white gloves to his patrons to hold his piping hot sausages and as most of the gloves were not returned, the supply began running low. He reportedly asked his brother-in-law, a baker, for help. The baker improvised long soft rolls that fit the meat - thus inventing the hot dog bun. Kraig says everyone wants to claim the hot dog bun as their own invention, but the most likely scenario is the practice was handed down by German immigrants and gradually became widespread in American culture.



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Another story that riles serious hot dog historians is how term "hot dog" came about. Some say the word was coined in 1901 at the New York Polo Grounds on a cold April day. Vendors were hawking hot dogs from portable hot water tanks shouting "They're red hot! Get your dachshund sausages while they're red hot!" A New York Journal sports cartoonist, Tad Dorgan, observed the scene and hastily drew a cartoon of barking dachshund sausages nestled warmly in rolls. Not sure how to spell "dachshund" he simply wrote "hot dog!" The cartoon is said to have been a sensation, thus coining the term "hot dog." However, historians have been unable to find this cartoon, despite Dorgan's enormous body of work and his popularity.

Kraig, and other culinary historians, point to college magazines where the word "hot dog" began appearing in the 1890s. The term was current at Yale in the fall of 1894, when "dog wagons" sold hot dogs at the dorms. The name was a sarcastic comment on the provenance of the meat. References to dachshund sausages and ultimately hot dogs can be traced to German immigrants in the 1800s. These immigrants brought not only sausages to America, but dachshund dogs. The name most likely began as a joke about the Germans' small, long, thin dogs. In fact, even Germans called the frankfurter a "little-dog" or "dachshund" sausage, thus linking the word "dog" to their popular concoction.

Material from: National Hot Dog & Sausage Council – USA Web: [www.hot-dog.org](http://www.hot-dog.org)

## **THE HOT DOGS TRUE HISTORY?**

The origin of the word "hot dog" stirs as much debate as the existence of UFOs. Conflicting stories abound and everyone wants to claim ownership of the catchy moniker of America's favorite food. Why are there so many stories about how the hot dog got its name and who invented the hot dog bun? Could there be a conspiracy involved?

The truth is out there ... and with the help of avid hot dog historians and linguists, the Council set out to find that truth.

## **THE INFAMOUS STORY ABOUT CARTOONIST TAD DORGAN OF NEW YORK JOURNAL**

"Forget about it," says Bruce Kraig, Ph.D., hot dog historian and professor emeritus at Roosevelt University in Illinois.

As the legend goes, Dorgan observed vendor Harry Stevens selling the "hot dachshund sausages" during a game at the New York Polo Grounds and shouting "Get your red-hot dachshund sausages!" Dorgan illustrated this scene with a dachshund dog nestled in a bun with the caption "get your hot dogs."

No one has found a copy of the cartoon said to have given the hot dog its name. Maybe the cartoon never existed. Or maybe it is buried deep within the National Archives or the maze of the Pentagon. Kraig suggests cartoon began as a joke between Dorgan and the vendor who were reputedly good friends, but was by no means the first reference to "hot dogs." In fact, one report the Council came



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across suggested the story may have come from Stevens' obituary in the New York Herald on May 4, 1934, in which the events are recorded.

But references to dachshund sausages and ultimately hot dogs can be traced to German immigrants in the 1800s. German immigrants brought not only the sausage with them in the late 1800s, but also dachshund dogs. Kraig says the name hot dog probably began as a joke about the Germans' small, long, thin dogs. Ever the butt of humor and rumor, the moniker that stuck was likely a joke regarding the provenance of the tasty sausage served on a bun cut lengthwise.

Barry Popick, a prominent hot dog historian and linguist at the university, says the word "hot dog" began appearing in college magazines in the 1890s. Students at Yale University began to refer to the wagons selling hot sausages in buns outside their dorms as "dog wagons." Kraig said one of the popular stands was dubbed even "The Kennel Club." It didn't take long for the use of the word "dog" to become "hot dog." Popick found the first reference to "hot dogs" in an article published in the October 19, 1895, issue of the Yale Record which referred to folks "contentedly munching on hot dogs." The equally infamous story about the vendor who loaned his customers white gloves to hold the hot sausages, but ultimately implored a local baker to design a bun?

Not a chance, says Kraig. "Everyone wants to claim ownership of this invention," he said.

But the truth is that Germans have been eating their "little dog" sausages with bread for ages, Kraig said. Some reports say German immigrants first sold them from push carts in New York City's Bowery in the 1860s. Another story claims Charles Feltman, a German butcher in 1871, served the sausages with milk rolls from his stand on Coney Island. The hot dog bun made its popular debut at the Colombian Exposition where visitors enjoyed large quantities of the sausages. Since the sausage culture is German, it is likely that Germans introduced the practice of eating the dachshund sausages, which we today know as the hot dog, nestled in a bun.

While the hot dog's precise history may never be known, perhaps it is this mystery that adds to the hot dog's mystique and has helped the hot dog maintain its position as one of America's favorite foods!

## **HOT DOGS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES**

Spanish Hot Dog - Perrito Caliente

Italian Hot Dog - Caldo cane

French Hot Dog - Chien chaud

German Hot Dog - Heisser Hund or Wurst

Portuguese Hot Dog - Cachorro quente

Swedish Hot Dog - Korv or varmkorv

Norwegian/Danish Hot Dog - Grillpølser

Czech Hot Dog - Park v rohlíku

Dutch Hot Dog - Worstjes

Finnish Hot Dog - Makkarat