

WHAT MAKES THE BRITISH SAUSAGE LEGENDARY? FACTS AND STATISTICS ABOUT THE GREAT BRITISH BANGER

What's in a name

- The word sausage derives from the Latin salsisium, meaning something that has been salted
- According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first specific reference in English came in a fifteenth century vocabulary 'Salcicia', a 'sawsage'
- Sausages were nicknamed bangers during the Second World War. Their high water content due to the scarcity of other ingredients meant that they were liable to explode when cooked as the water turned to steam
- Sausages should be cooked slowly over a medium heat and should not be pricked as this lets out the flavour. They will only burst if cooked too quickly!
- The British sausage even has its own Fan Club, the British Sausage Appreciation Society. The Society has over 5,000 members in the UK. The Highlight of the Society's year is British Sausage Week which this year takes place from the 31st October to 6th November 2011

History of the sausage

- Sausages are even older than ancient Greece or Rome - the Sumerians (modern day Iraq) made sausages 5,000 years ago
- During the early days of the Empire, Romans mixed fresh pork with finely chopped white pine nuts, cumin seed, bay leaves and black pepper
- In 320 AD, because of their association with pagan festivals, Roman Emperor Constantinus I and the Catholic Church made sausage eating a sin and their consumption was banned! This led to sausages going underground until the ban was lifted
- It is believed that sausages were brought to Britain by the Romans some time before 400 AD. Since then various English counties have each had their own way of flavouring their local sausage – e.g. Lincolnshire favours fresh sage and Cheshire uses Caraway and Coriander
- By the Middle Ages sausage making had spread to Northern Europe and different varieties began to develop as butchers used ingredients available locally. In some locations, early sausage makers became so adept at making distinctive sausages that their fame spread across Europe
- It was in the reign of Charles I that sausages were divided into links for the first time in Britain
- Once made, sausages used to be stuck up chimneys to be mildly cured

Sausage psychology

- Delving into the mind of a sausage lover reveals that the combination of a hard exterior and soft interior and the moreish quality and succulent aftertaste makes the sausage irresistible
- While the convenient ease of cooking and the range of flavours from the traditional to the ethnic mean that Britons just can't get enough

"That glorious smell of cooking sausages – it always could take me back 'ome."

The numbers

- During the year to June 2011 we ate 191,040 tonnes of sausages worth £667.4 million
- The value of the premium sausage sector grew by 1.9% in 2010/2011
- 87% of British households buy sausages, 47% at least every four weeks
- Each household spends an average of £30.22 per year on sausages
- Every day, five million Britons will eat sausages
- More pork sausages are eaten as part of an evening meal, with 48% consumed; compared to 16% at breakfast, 16% at lunch, and 2% as a snack and 18% at Teatime
- The great British banger is the nation's favourite meat-based dinner, outselling chicken or minced beef and accounting for a staggering 854 million meals every year
- 91% of sausages are consumed in the home
- 32% of the sausage market is classified as premium, 58% as standard, 4% as low fat and 6% as economy (Volume)
- 88% of sausages are made from pork

Sausages today

- There are more than 470 recipes and flavours for sausages in Britain. If you take into account all the different variations from butchers across the country you could eat a different British sausage every day for ten years
- Sausages are an excellent source of high quality protein, containing all the essential amino acids necessary for growth, maintenance and repair of body tissue. Sausages also provide significant amounts of vitamins and minerals
- Pork sausages are the nation's favourite, with the runner up being beef. Other popular varieties include pork and herb, Cumberland, pork and apple, pork and leek and pork and stilton
- Potatoes are the most common accompaniment, followed by bread, baked beans, carrots and peas
- Sausage preferences vary by region. The North prefers the meat more coarsely ground, whereas the South prefers sausages to be smoother
- YORKSHIRE'S very own sausage was unveiled in August 2011. Produced by an Ilkley butcher the winning creation was crowned as a Yorkshire Sausage on Yorkshire Day. It was voted for its traditional mix of pork sausage with salt, pepper, mace, ground coriander, nutmeg and parsley.
- Authentic Cumberland sausages are never split into links
- The most expensive sausage ever was made from Fillet steak with Champagne and truffles and cost £20 a pack
- The World's longest sausage was made during British Sausage Week 2000 and weighed 15.5 tonnes and was 35 miles long!
- Sausage machines can fill sausages at a rate of 1 ½ miles an hour
- Approximately 182,848 metric tonnes of sausage were consumed in the UK last year! Laid end to end this gives us enough chipolatas to:
 - o Form a wall, four sausages high, around the entire coastline of Great Britain!
 - o Cover a distance from London to Perth in Australia and back twice!
 - o Wrap around the London Eye, the capital's Millennium wheel, 129 thousand times!
 - o Add another layer, 10 sausages high, to the entire length of the Great Wall of China!

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Bangers and Mash

- Bangers and Mash is a traditional dish made of potato and sausages, the latter of which may be one of a variety of flavoured sausages. The dish is usually served with a rich onion gravy
- Bangers and mash are frequently seen in D.C. Thomson comics such as *The Beano* and *The Dandy*, usually when the protagonists of the strips are given a "slap-up meal" as a reward for good behaviour. In these comics the dish is traditionally drawn as an oversized, conical pile of mashed potato with the sausages protruding from it
- "Bangers and Mash" is a comedy song by Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren, released in 1960. In the song Sellers is a Briton who married an Italian woman (Loren) during World War II, but has never developed a taste for Italian cuisine and wishes she could prepare "the bangers and mash me mother used to make"
- "Bangers and Mash" is also the seventh track by the band Radiohead on their album *In Rainbows*

Toad in the Hole

- Toad in the hole is a traditional English dish comprising sausages in Yorkshire pudding batter, usually served with vegetables and gravy
- The origin of the name 'Toad-in-the-Hole' is vague. Most suggestions are that the dish's resemblance to a toad sticking its little head out of a hole provide the dish with its somewhat unusual name

Celebrity fans

- Sausages really are the nations' favourite food, with celebrity fans including Prince Charles, Elizabeth Taylor, Michael Caine, Roger Moore, Keith Floyd, Elvis, who loved sausage rolls, Des O'Connor and Rachel Stevens whose favourite comfort food is a sausage sandwich
- Footballer John Terry and wife Toni Poole served sausages at their wedding in 2007, as did Kate Winslet. Katie Price and Peter Andre served guests bangers and mash when they married
- Apparently legendary highwayman, Dick Turpin, was known to moonlight as a butcher making sausages from the finest meats hunted in Epping Forest
- Queen Victoria was fond of sausages but insisted that the meat be hand chopped rather than minced

Celebrity quotes

- **Delia Smith:** Braised sausages seem to have turned up many times in my books over the years... I love them so much [Delia's How To Cook: Book One]
- **Ross Burden:** You can't beat the great British banger
- **Nigel Slater:** There are few things as warming as a hot sausage [Real Cooking]
- **Russell Grant:** They're heavenly; out of this world
- **Michael Caine:** Forget caviar, sausages are the food of the rich and famous
- **Elizabeth Taylor:** They are so delicious and so easy to prepare. When I come to London there is always one thing on my mind – a plateful of bangers and mash

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