

“One with Everything”

Taking a bite out of the hot dog’s history

Written by: **Shane Riggs**

Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

This little bit of history is sponsored by Gino and Louis Giatras, Curtis’ Famous Weiners.

Tis dogs’ delight to bark and bite,

Thus does the adage run.

But I delight to bite the dog

When placed inside a bun.

“Echoes from a Lunch Wagon”

— *Yale Record, October 5, 1895*

What do you want on it?

The “Dachshund”, wiener, frankfurters, foot longs, red hots, or just plain hot dogs. Call it what you want. Its history is as debated and as colorful as the condiments slathered on top.

One account alleges that at the 1904 St. Louis Worlds Fair, Antoine Feuchtwanger lent customers gloves to wear while eating his hot sausages. Many of the gloves were not returned, so Antoine’s brother-in-law made long rolls to encase the concoctions.

Another story is that on a cold day at the New York Polo Grounds in April 1900, Harry Stevens sold long German sausages wrapped in warm buns. He advertised them as “red hot dachshund sausages.” Cartoonist T. A. Dorgan was there and later published a political cartoon of a live dog reclined in a roll with the caption “one hot dog.”

Both dates however, contradict a poem published years earlier in the Yale Record in which the writer romanticizes about the pleasures of a hot dog inside a bun. The truth is, Americans don’t care where their dogs originated ... just as long as they keep on coming.

Here are some quick facts about a food that continues to cut the mustard:

- Eating elongated sausages can be traced back to 9 B.C. It’s even referenced in Homer’s *Odyssey*.
- Frankfurt, Germany, is traditionally credited with originating the frankfurter. However, the folks of Coburg would disagree. They assert Johann Georgh-ehner, a native of their city, crafted the first “hot dog”.



Third generation owner of Curtis’ Famous Weiners, Gino Giatras, and father, Louis serve up a plate of their well-known weiners with the works.

- German immigrants in New York City were known to sell sausage sandwiches with a side of sauerkraut from pushcarts during the time of the Civil War.
- The first “sausage” sold at a baseball game was in 1893 in St. Louis.
- Sausage served with mustard was voted “the most popular new food attraction” at the Colombian Expo that same year.
- The average American consumes 80 hot dogs a year.
- A Texas entrepreneur making his way north in the early 20th century pedaled a sauce city by city as a topping for hot dogs. He sold his recipe in Cumberland to what would eventually be Curtis’ Wieners. After the Texan reached New York, the recipe was popularized as “Coney Island sauce,” even though Cumberland had been serving up the sauce for nearly a year earlier in 1917 and at Curtis’ ... they still are.

