

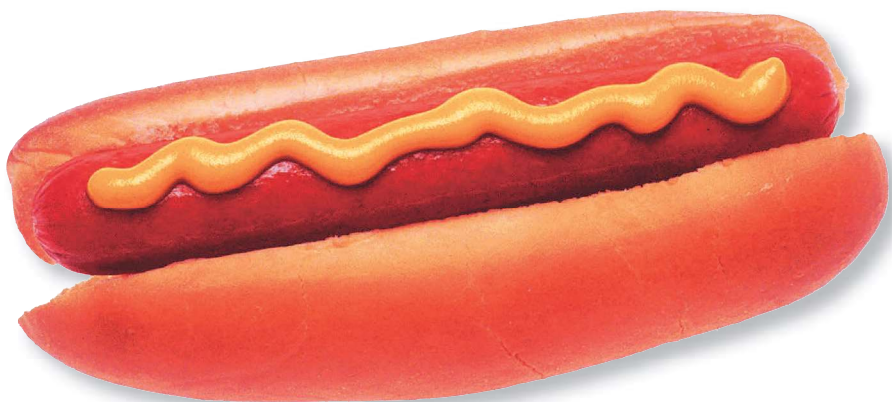
More American Than Apple Pie

Pat Morgan

Editor's Note: Thank you to our guest author, Pat Morgan, treasurer and webmaster of the Greater Mound City Stamp Club in St. Louis, Mo. Check out the club's website (www.greatermoundcity.org), which was awarded a Large Gold in the 2023 APS Star Route Awards.

I was recently looking for Disney stamps for my daughter and ran across the "Street Vendor" stamp from St. Vincent (Figure 1). A lightbulb went on: ah, the humble hot dog!

Let the debates begin. What is or isn't allowed to go on your hot dog, and which is better, the burnt one or the one with just the perfect grill marks at the family picnic? Is it a sandwich or not? One would think that the hot dog would not cause such debate, but even within my house we can't agree on whether it's a hot dog if there is no bun or if it's acceptable to put ketchup on the dog.



All that aside, the hot dog has had its praises displayed on a very small number of postage stamps – two from around the world (Figures 5 and 9), but of course **not** a single time by the United States Postal Service! Two stamps also honor hot dog stands (Figures 1 and 2).

When considering a gastronomy-related topical collection in this area, I would suggest not limiting your collection to just hot dogs, but also include sausages so you have a more interesting and fun collection. Many more postage stamps exist for sausages, but not as many for hot dogs. You will find more interesting covers that celebrate hot dogs due to the pop culture, culinary and geographic interest surrounding the good old hot dog. In the remainder of this article, I'll try to provide some history and interesting facts about what has become this uniquely American food. Now, on to the *meat* of the article.

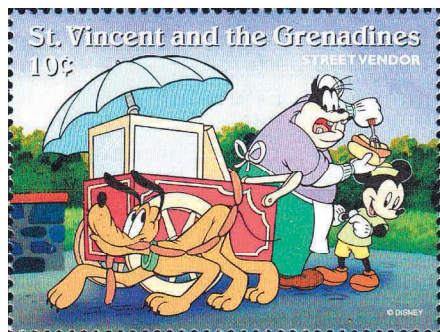


Figure 1. St. Vincent Scott 2274f (1996). Disney's Pluto bedeviling a street vendor preparing a hot dog.



Figure 2. Austria Scott 2938 (2021). A sausage stand in Austria advertising hot dogs for sale.

So, Are Hot Dogs Also Sausages?

Yes! A sausage is ground meat stuffed into a casing (sometimes the casing is then removed), so a hot dog is a sausage. In my opinion, the hot dog must be served in a partially split bun (which is why it is not a sandwich; sandwiches by definition are served on two pieces of bread). The stamp from New Zealand is even labeled as a hot dog but depicts what is a corn dog to most Americans (Figure 3). My wife, Lesa, and I have added this to the list of many things we'll never agree on!



Figure 3. New Zealand Scott 1649 (2000). "Hot Dog" in Kiwi culture; Americans would describe it as a corn dog.



Figure 4a. Portugal Scott 3488 (2013). Example of sausage, but not hot dogs, on stamps.



Figure 4b (second from left). Iceland Scott 896i (1999).



Figure 4c (right). New Zealand Scott 2274a, 2274d (2009).



Figure 4d (below). Poland Scott 4351 (2018).

Sausages (Figures 4a-4d) were brought to the United States by German immigrants. The sausage, known as a Frankfurter Würstchen, or “frank,” originated in Frankfurt, Germany. These pork sausages existed since the 13th century. In the 16th century, sausages were served during imperial coronations, starting with Maximilian II, Holy Roman Emperor, as king. The butcher Johann Georg Lahner, in the late 1700s, brought the Frankfurter Würstchen to Vienna, Austria, where he added beef to the mixture. “Vienna” in German is Wien. Thus, “wieners” referred to the sausages of Vienna, made of a mixture of pork and beef.

The frankfurter and wiener sausages became a working-class street food in the United States, sold at stands and carts, served in waxed paper. The term dog has been used as a synonym for sausage since the 1800s, possibly from accusations that sausage makers used dog meat in their products. In Germany, dog meat consumption was common during the 19th and 20th centuries.

What is a Hot Dog?

A hot dog (Figure 5) consists of a grilled or steamed sausage (frankfurter or wiener) served in the slit of a partially sliced bun. Hot dogs are a key element of American food culture,



Figure 5. Denmark Scott 1331 (2005). Hot dog; part of Europa Gastronomy series.



Figure 6 (left). Collins cachet for United States Scott 4341 (2008) illustrates the connection between baseball and hot dogs.

having obtained significant cultural and patriotic status from their association with public events and sports, especially baseball (Figure 6), since the 1920s. In the United States, the term “hot dog” refers to both the sausage by itself and the combination of sausage and bun. Over the years, many nicknames that could apply to either, including frankfurter, frank, wiener, weenie, Coney and red hot, have emerged.

So, is the hot dog a sandwich or not? There is an ongoing debate about whether a hot dog fits the description of a sandwich (57% agree it is not a sandwich). The National Hot Dog & Sausage Council (NHDSC, a division of the American Meat Institute) has declared that a hot dog is not a sandwich, as have hot-dog-eating champions Joey Chestnut and Takeru Kobayashi. But *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* has stated that a hot dog is a sandwich. United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Figure 7) also weighed in on the matter, stating that a hot dog might be categorized as a sandwich, but ultimately it comes down to the definition of a sandwich. So, let the controversy continue!

Although particularly connected with New York City and Chicago, Ill., the hot dog eventually became pervasive across the United States during the 1900s. And let’s be honest. Without the bun, the argument about the condiments is mute. The bun has given the humble wiener the ability to become the culinary delight and legend it has become.

Origins of the Hot Dog

There are several claims as to the origins of serving sausage on a bun (i.e., a hot dog) in the United States:

1867: Charles Feltman, at Coney Island in New York City, was selling “Coney Island Red Hots” and had a cart made with a stove on which to boil sausages, with a compartment to keep buns, which leads one to consider Feltman to be the first to serve wieners in a bun.

1880s: A German immigrant named Antoine (Anton) Ludwig Feuchtwanger allegedly pioneered the practice in the American midwest. One account is that Feuchtwanger sold hot dogs on the streets of St. Louis, Mo., where he was providing gloves to his customers so that they could handle the sausages without burning their hands. He was losing money when customers did not return the gloves, so his wife suggested serving the sausages in a roll instead. The other account is that Feuchtwanger was serving sausages in rolls at either the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis (Figure 8), or earlier, at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where, again, the white gloves provided to customers to protect their hands were being kept as souvenirs.



Figure 8. Hot dog anniversary.

1901: The last claim is that food concessionaire Harry M. Stevens, while working at the New York Polo Grounds, started using small French rolls to hold the sausages after he ran out of the waxed paper he had been using.

Regardless, whether one of these is the actual origin, the partially split bun has become the item that truly made the hot dog the American icon it is.



Figure 7. United States Scott 5821 (2023). Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

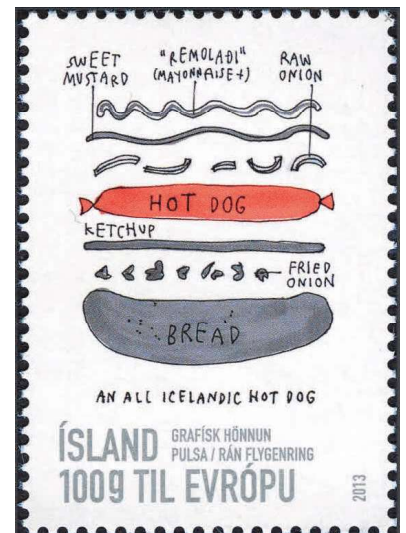


Figure 9. Iceland Scott 1298 (2013) – hot dog condiments depicted graphically.

Figure 10. Cacheted cover, National Hot Dog Day, 2020.



Preparation and Condiments

The most common American hot dog condiments include mustard, ketchup, relish and onions. This is true for many other countries, including Iceland (Figure 9). Other toppings include sauerkraut, jalapeños, chili (my favorite), grated cheese, pickles, coleslaw, bacon, olives and many more. Preparations vary regionally across the country. In 2005, the U.S.-based National Hot Dog and Sausage Council (NHDSC) found mustard (32%) to be the most popular condiment, followed by ketchup (23%), chili (17%), pickle relish (9%) and onions (7%).

Now, let's talk about a controversy: Just ask a New Yorker their opinion of a Chicago Dog or vice versa. New York and Chicago dogs are among the most popular, but other regions have their distinct varieties, too. Chicago's signature hot dog came about after rival vendors kept adding more toppings to "one-up" each other. Today, a Chicago Dog is an all-beef hot dog on a steamed poppyseed bun with raw onions, Chicago-style bright green relish, mustard, tomato slices, a pickle spear, sport peppers and finished off with a dash of celery salt.

New York Style Dog, served from the Bronx to Battery Park to Coney Island, comes with steamed onions and a pale, deli-style yellow mustard.

Kansas City Dog is served with sauerkraut and melted Swiss cheese on a sesame-seed bun.

Sonoran Dog, a southwestern favorite, is a grilled bacon-wrapped hot dog on a sturdy bun with pinto beans, grilled onions, green peppers, chopped fresh tomatoes, relish, tomatillo jalapeño salsa, mayonnaise, mustard and topped with shredded cheese.



Figure 11. Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest, 2021.

Figure 12. Oscar Mayer Frankmobile, 2023.



Michigan Coney Island Dog (or Michigan Coney) is the favorite of Michiganders and features a meaty chili sauce on top of a hot dog with mustard and onion.

Southern Style Dog, served down south, is topped with coleslaw and some delicious Vidalia onions.

West Virginia Dog, just like the southern style, is topped with coleslaw but also features chili and mustard.

So, which is your favorite?

Some Surprising Hot Dog Facts:

- Hot dogs have been approved for transport and consumption in space by NASA. The Apollo 7 astronauts had hot dogs on their way to the moon.
- Americans purchase nine billion hot dogs per year from stores and consume approximately 20 billion when you count the hot dogs sold at restaurants and ballparks, according to the NHDSC.
- The historical reason for the mismatched quantity of buns to dogs is that when hot dogs were first sold in the United States, they were not sold in grocery stores; a wholesale order of 10 was the natural choice. However, when wholesale bun and roll bakeries started to bake hot dog buns, their pans baked long rolls in groups of four, so when stacked, they made eight, not 10.
- The topic of hot dog meat is often subject to speculation. In most cases, it is just common muscle groups from familiar meats – pork, beef, chicken and/or turkey – that are ground and put into casings. The U.S. Department of Agriculture requires that any hot dogs made with “variety meats,” such as liver and heart, must be labeled to declare those ingredients on the package. So, be sure to read the label.
- Hot dog ambassador? That’s correct. Since 2021, the NHDSC has held a contest to find the nation’s five most passionate hot dog fans, influencers and taste testers
- Is there a right way to eat a hot dog? Probably not, but there is an official guide. The NHDSC created an official “Hot Dog Etiquette” guide (<https://www.hot-dog.org/culture/hot-dog-etiquette>). According to the guide, if you eat a hot dog with a fork or top it with ketchup after the age of 18, you are way out of line. It’s a fun read and may or may not be useful to justify your way of eating a hot dog!
- Mickey Mouse’s first on-screen words in the 1929 cartoon *The Karnival Kid* were “Hot Dog!,” marking his transition from the silent screen.
- July is National Hot Dog Month! National Hot Dog Day falls on the third Wednesday of July each year. But let’s be honest, there is no wrong day or month of the year to eat hot dogs.



Figure 13. Oscar Mayer Weiner Whistle.

• On June 11, 1939, as war loomed over Europe, King George VI joined President Roosevelt at the president's Hyde Park residence for his first-ever hot dogs.

Pop Culture

There are many pop-cultural icons when it comes to the hot dog. Some of these are the Hot Dog Days, Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest, the Oscar Mayer Wiernemobile and the Wiener Whistle, to name a few.

Hot Dog Days: Hot dogs are celebrated throughout hot dog-eating countries, including the United States, Canada and Australia, by holding Hot Dog Days festivals (Figure 10). The earliest known Hot Dog Day was held in Alfred, N.Y., in 1972. As the name suggests, the festivals revolve around eating hot dogs, but additionally, there are many other activities, such as wiener-dog races, root beer chugging contests and face painting. Industry groups, such as NHDSC in the United States, encourage, sponsor and support some of these events.

Nathan's Famous: It seems crazy that there are professional competitive hot dog eaters in the world, but there are, and these folks show up each July to see who can eat the most hot dogs (Figure 11). The record for hot dogs eaten in 10 minutes is 76, or about \$69 worth of hot dogs. This record is held by Joey Chestnut, who achieved this feat at Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest on July 4, 2021, beating his previous record of 75, set the year before. The last person to hold the record before Chestnut was Takeru Kobayashi. Competitive eater Miki Sudo holds the record for most hot dogs eaten in 10 minutes by a female at 48.5 hot dogs, setting this record on July 4, 2020. The last person to hold the record before Sudo was Sonya Thomas.

Wiernemobile: The first Wiernemobile, a hot-dog-shaped vehicle, was created by Oscar Mayer's nephew, Carl G. Mayer, in 1936 and built by General Body Company of Chicago. Over the years, there have been 11 companies used to manufacture the Wiernemobiles, which have been built on several different chassis. In 2000, the Wiernemobiles were made by Craftsman Industries in St. Charles, Mo. (Figure 12). The Wiernemobiles travel across the country promoting Oscar Mayer's all-beef frankfurters. In May 2023, after 87 years, Oscar Mayer announced the Wiernemobile would be renamed the Frankmobile. In only four short months, due to a huge backlash, the company issued the following in September 2023: "It's been FRANKastic summer! But like you, we missed this BUNderful icon. Help us welcome back the Wiernemobile!" The drivers of the Wiernemobile are hired for a year-long assignment and are required to attend a two-week training course at Hot Dog High in Wisconsin.

Oscar Mayer Wiener Whistle: If you are a boomer, like I am, it's very likely that you at some time either have had or have seen an Oscar Mayer Wiener Whistle (Figure 13). The sausage-shaped whistle was first developed in 1951 by Carl Mayer to be used as a promotional item and was first handed out at Wiernemobile appearances. It was in 1958 that the whistle was first included with a package of Oscar Mayer Wieners. In 1964, the whistles were sold for 2¢ out of vending machines at the 1964 World's Fair in New York. The whistle today is now shaped like a miniature Wiernemobile.

Records

The world's longest hot dog was 60 meters (197 ft.) long and rested within a 60.3-meter (198 ft.) bun (Figure 14). The hot dog was prepared by Shizuoka Meat Producers for the All-Japan Bread Association, which baked the bun and coordinated the event, including official measurements for the world record. The hot dog and bun were the center of a media event in celebration of the association's 50th anniversary on Aug. 4, 2006, at the Akasaka Prince Hotel in Tokyo. No telling if it was worth eating.

The most expensive hot dog, 230 Fifth Hotdog, is \$2,300 and is sold at the restaurant 230 Fifth in New York City. The dog is made from dry-aged Japanese wagyu beef and topped with Dom Perignon-caramelized Vidalia onions, caviar and sauerkraut that has been painstakingly braised in a type of champagne known as Cristal. If you're in New York and want to have one of these decadent hot dogs, you'll need to call 48 hours in advance to order.



Figure 14. World's Longest Hot Dog, certified in 2006 by the All-Japan Bread Association.

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Author Note:

I wish you success with your gastronomy-related topical collections and hope that you will be sure to add hot dogs and sausages to your stamp collection. If you have any comments or questions, please reach out via email at pjmorgan622@gmail.com. My thanks to David Mahsman and Lesa Morgan for editing assistance.

What's in Those Press Sheets?

Wayne L. Youngblood



Beginning in 2013, two-sided booklet stamps sold in die-cut press sheet format yielded imperf-between pairs, imperf-internally blocks and imperf-within stamps with booklet labels. This occurs because of the slightly different formatting of printing plates to accommodate booklets and their subsequent slitting into individual panes. Since press sheets are not processed into panes, what would normally be straight edges on booklets are transformed into these interesting partially perforated varieties. Although not every one of these issues are alike, most are similar. Let's take a brief look at the varieties that are found on the 2017 Delicioso Forever stamps, Scott 5192-5197.

The key piece from the sheet is a block of four that is imperforate internally (above right). A full press sheet of 168 stamps yields only three of these blocks, each valued at \$10 by Scott. Similarly, only three pairs and two singles of the imperf internally stamps connected to booklet labels are found in a press sheet (right). Each is also valued by Scott at \$10. Horizontal pairs, imperf-between are more plentiful (above), with 54 on a press sheet (nine of these have a straight edge at top or bottom), representing eight each of three different types. Each of these is valued by Scott at \$4.

Finally, there are only two vertical pairs, imperf-between, one of each of two types (not shown), valued by Scott at \$6. Clearly, there is currently no correlation between relative scarcity and value for these varieties, but this will likely correct itself in the marketplace over time.

