

## LANGUAGE OF FOOD



Eponyms are words that have entered the language but originated as proper names. Usually they are descriptive of everyday objects, an apple danish, french-fries, a sandwich or even a hamburger. Foods are often named after their place of origin, or perceived popularity with a nation, the weiner is named after the German for Vienna, currants were a corruption of the Latin for Corinthe where the best grapes were thought to come from. Sandwich is derived from the Earl of Sandwich, purported to be an inveterate gambler who begrudged time away from the tables and thus concocted a simple finger food.

Many food eponyms are simply the name of the chef who created the recipe, the developer of the fruit or vegetable or the restaurant which served it, Cobb's Salad, Cox's Orange Pippin and Delmonico's Steak are examples. The Bartlett pear was misappropriated by Mr. Bartlett of Massachusetts, it was actually the Williams pear before that. Rudolf Boysen developed a loganberry, blackberry and raspberry cross which is known as a boysenberry; the loganberry itself is named after an American judge, James Logan. Kaiser rolls originated in the 15th century when a Viennese baker produced a batch in honor of the Holy Roman Emperor featuring his profile stamped on the top. Melba toast is named for the soprano Dame Nellie Melba, who in turn got her stage-name from her birthplace, Melbourne, Australia; while sick and staying at the Savoy in London, the chef Cesar Ritz (from whom we get the word ritzy)

prepared extremely dry toast to her order, Peach Melba is also named after her.

Famous people often had food named after them, Napoleon brandy, Beef Wellington and Garibaldi's, this last being the favorite snack for a man with little spare time in between unifying Italy. Crepes Suzettes were supposedly first served to the future King Edward VII at the Cafe Royal in Paris where he was dining with a 'female companion'. To protect his anonymity the crepes were named after her. A margarita was first served to Rita Hayworth, so the story goes, whose full first name was, you guessed it, Margarita. On the other hand the Baby Ruth candy bar caused a lawsuit to be filed by the famous baseball slugger, resulting in the 'official' story that the name derives from Grover Cleveland grand-daughter Ruth, why she would have boosted sales is not revealed. Tangerines came from Tangiers while the Bing cherry was named after the Manchurian foreman of Samuel Lewellin, an Oregon horticulturist and Clementines after Pere Clement Rodier, a French monk living in North Africa.

There are many more of course, Chateaubriand steak was a recipe created by Vicomte Chateaubriand while he was ambassador to England, probably because of the poor level of cooking he encountered there. Angus beef is named after the Angus breed of cattle from the county of the same name in Scotland. Granny Smith was Marie Ana Smith of Australia and Grahams Crackers came from the puritanically inclined Presbyterian minister Sylvester Graham who believed in vegetarianism, teetotalism and whole wheat. Incidentally, the word teetotal came from an advocate of total abstinence who was cruelly parodied for his stutter; so we shall toast them all with a nice cup of Earl Grey.