

A Short History of Chips (B1)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you eat snacks between your meals?
2. If so, are they usually sweet or savoury snacks?
3. Do you ever buy packets of potato chips (called *crisps* in the UK)?
4. If so, do you have a favourite brand?

B – Listen and answer

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and complete them.

1. In the USA, _____ billion pounds of potato chips are eaten every year.
2. Some say that potato chips were invented by George Crum in the _____ century.
3. Crum was a chef working at Moon's _____ House, Saratoga Springs, New York.
4. One day, in _____, a rich customer complained about the fried potatoes and sent them back.
5. He said he wanted a more _____ version.
6. In another version of the story, it was Crum's _____ who invented potato chips.
7. According to yet another theory, an _____ had already created them by 1817.
8. The most popular flavoured chips are salt and pepper or _____.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What is the average yearly consumption of potato chips per person in the USA?
2. What was wrong with the chips served to Cornelius Vanderbilt?
3. How did Crum feel about Vanderbilt's criticism? Why?
4. What did he do to make sure the potatoes were very crunchy?
5. Why was Crum surprised by Vanderbilt's reaction?
6. How did Catherine Adkins Wicks invent chips, according to another version of the story?
7. Why do some people think William Kitchiner created potato chips before Crum?
8. Why are bags of potato chips always only half full?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)

1. I cut my finger while I was _____ some bread for toast.
2. Joseph is very _____. He cuts every bit of fat off his steaks.
3. The new company has done very well this year. Its _____ has increased by 30 per cent.
4. Uncle George lost his balance and fell in the pond. His son jumped in and _____ him out.
5. The government has denied the rumour. There is an investigation to find the _____ of it.
6. It rained all night and the next morning the tennis courts were too _____ to play on.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 6)

Write one word only in each space.

A few years ago, a government survey found that a third of British children eat crisps every day. The remaining two ¹ _____ eat them several times a week. This is really ² _____ news, as it is well-known that crisps are full of salt, sugar and, ³ _____ all, fat.

In fact, researchers claim that eating a packet of crisps a day is more or less the ⁴ _____ as drinking five litres of cooking oil a year. It ⁵ _____ been proved that the ingredients in crisps greatly increase the risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Therefore, eating too ⁶ _____ crisps during childhood can lead to a lifetime of ill-health.

F – Write about it

Write about a snack that's very popular in your country. Mention:

- what it's made of;
- when it's eaten;
- where it originated;
- whether it's healthy or unhealthy;
- how often you eat it.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. 1.85 2. 19th 3. Lake 4. 1853 5. crunchy 6. sister 7. English doctor 8. cheese and onion

C – Read and answer

1. It's 6.6 pounds (2.99 kg). 2. They were thick and soggy./They weren't crunchy. 3. He was annoyed because he thought Vanderbilt was too fussy. 4. He sliced the potatoes very thinly and fried them to a crisp/almost burnt them. 5. Because he expected Vanderbilt to say the potatoes were too crisp. 6. She accidentally dropped a thin slice of potato into boiling fat. 7. Because in 1817 he had published a cookbook with a recipe for 'potatoes fried in slices'. 8. Because the space prevents the crisps from being crushed.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. slicing 2. fussy 3. turnover 4. fished 5. source 6. soggy

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?

1. thirds 2. bad/awful/terrible/... (or any similar negative adjective) 3. above 4. same 5. has 6. many