

# Milchidika with Marty: *Why is it called...*

## **An Egg Cream:**

When I was a young boy, which seems a very long time ago; if you went into the local candy store; one that had a soda fountain, you could order a delicious soda called an "egg cream." The egg cream consisted of a few squirts of "Fox's U-Bet" chocolate syrup, a splash of milk, and then a spritz of seltzer, which left a frothy topping; but no egg and no cream. It was delicious, and it only cost a nickel.

If you didn't have the 5 cents, you could order a "2 cents plain" which was just a glass of seltzer.

It had been assumed that the egg cream originated among Eastern European Jewish immigrants in New York City, and in those days the egg cream was made with chocolate syrup, real cream, and seltzer to give it some fizz.

One accepted theory is that the word "egg" is a corruption of the German word "echt" meaning genuine or real; and this was therefore a "real cream."

The other theory is that the Yiddish actor Boris Thomashefsky requested a drink that he had in Paris which was called "Chocolat et creme" and with his heavy accent morphed into something like "egg cream."

By the way, a five cent coin is called a "nickel" because that was what it was made of in those earlier days.

I haven't had an egg cream in years. Fox's U-Bet chocolate syrup is still around, and I'm going to try making my own and see how it comes out.

## **Seltzer:**

I have a few friends with the last name of Seltzer. Did someone in their family come up with the idea of injecting water with carbon dioxide to make something which we now drink and call club soda, or sparkling water, or seltzer? I doubt it.

The name probably comes from the fact that there are artesian wells that produce this bubbly water in the German Taunus mountains, in a town with the name of "Selters."

We now buy seltzer in cans and bottles in the supermarket. But I remember that the parents of some of my wealthier friends had something called a "Seltzer Bottle." It was a blue glass bottle with a release valve and a spout for dispensing pressurized soda water and was the center piece on the dining table at all events. The bottles were pre-charged with water and gas. I remember adults having a "scotch" with a spritz of seltzer. The bottles were not thrown away when empty, but returned to the retailer who charged a deposit to make sure that they were indeed returned to him.

## **Hot Dog:**

Wait till you hear where this name originates.

When my grandson was much younger, we went to a baseball game and while seated in the stands, I asked him if he wanted a frankfurter. He looked at me and said, "What's that?" I realized that we were from two different generations and then said, "How about a hot dog?" "Sure."

I probably call that long red skinny thing; either a frankfurter, a frank, a hot dog, and infrequently a weiner.

The word "frankfurter" comes from Frankfurt, Germany, where pork sausages originated since the 13th century. A butcher in Vienna, Austria added beef to the mixture, and it was then called a "weiner."

The frankfurters in those days were served hot and without a bun. You had to keep jiggling it in your hand while biting into it, to avoid burning yourself.

A German immigrant named Feuchtwanger sold hot dogs on the street in St. Louis, Missouri, and provided gloves to his customers so that they could handle the sausage without burning their hands. Losing money when the customers didn't return the gloves, Feuchtwanger's wife suggested serving the sausages in a roll instead. And that's how it began.

There was at times a rumor that some unscrupulous vendors would add a little chopped up dog meat to their concoction, and that's how it got the name "hot dog." I hope that's not true.

### **Swiss Cheese:**

I know that we all realize that "Swiss Cheese" must have originated at some time in the past in Switzerland. In fact it originated in the area around Emmental, Switzerland. Now it's manufactured in the United States, often in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

We know it as the cheese with small holes or "eyes". Swiss cheese without holes is called "blind. In the process of manufacturing the cheese, certain bacteria used in the process release carbon dioxide which slowly forms bubbles that develop the "eyes." It was also thought that in the earlier days when the sanitation in the manufacturing process was not so strict that bits of debris such as "hay" played a roll in creating the eyes in the cheese.

In general, the larger the eyes in the Swiss cheese, the more pronounced its flavor, because a longer fermentation period gives the bacteria more time to act. This poses a problem, however, because cheese with large eyes does not slice well and comes apart in mechanical slicers. As a result, industry regulators have limited the eye size by which Swiss cheese receives the grade A stamp.