

History of the bagel

Bagels are enjoyed all over America! Ever wonder where the bagel came from?

In 1683 a Jewish baker in Vienna, Austria was making a special bread for the Polish king who had protected the city from Turkish invasion. Initially it was shaped in the form of a riding stirrup because the king liked to ride horses for fun. It was said that the bagel possesses good luck and magical powers.

Bagels were very popular with Jews in Poland. but the bagel did not seem to catch on with Jews in Germany and Russia. Most of the breads in Europe were made by professional bakers. However, bagels were made by women in their small kitchens. Their husbands and children would then take them out in baskets and sell them on street corners.

Although bagels were eaten at regular meals, they were also specifically served at special occasions such as brit milah, funerals, weddings, and before and after fast days because their circular shape with no beginning and no end reminds us of the circle of life.

In the 1880s when people from Europe immigrated to America they brought bagels with them. Bagels were eaten mostly by Jewish people for the next 50 years. In 1907, 300 bagel bakers formed the International Beigel Bakers Union. Only boys who had father who made bagels were allowed in. People worked in teams of 4 to make the bagels and did not share recipes. When the bagel machine was invented in 1962 and the bagel makers were not needed, this union became the representative for grocery workers.

In New York in the early 1900s, Sunday Brunch was a very popular meal. At first Jews could not go because they could not eat Eggs Benedict which had ham and hollandaise sauce on top of eggs on a bagel. Someone got the idea to replace lox for the ham and cream cheese for the sauce, and soon Jewish New Yorkers were all enjoying Sunday Brunch! Before that lox and cream cheese had never touched a bagel even in Europe. Bagels were also topped

with poppy seeds, kosher salt, onion, garlic, sesame seeds, caraway seeds or a combination of all six (the "everything" bagel) for the first time in the early 1900s. In 1930, the New York Times ran a story on the bagel, and the current spelling appeared in print in the newspaper for the first time. Before that the bagel was called by its Yiddish name, the beigel. This was a sign that non-Jewish Americans were catching on to the bagel craze.

In Israel, like in the United States, bagels were made by eastern European immigrants. These women boiled and baked the bagels in their kitchens. As these women got older, bagels were seen less and less because no one knew how to make them. It was not until Bonkers Bagels opened in Jerusalem in 1994 that American-style bagels were seen in Israel. Other bagel stores followed, and now it is very common to see all kinds of bagels with all kinds of toppings in Israel.

People like to enjoy their bagels in all different ways. There is always the American classic of lox and cream cheese on a bagel. However, others will schmear their bagel with tuna, peanut butter or hummus. The cream cheese business has also grown with the bagel, and there are many flavors available. Personally, I prefer mine with scrambled eggs.

However, you enjoy your bagel, this special circular bread should be admired for its long journey as a tasty treat. It started as a regular food eaten by Polish Jews to a favorite American and International bread. It is still used to celebrate the circle of life at many Jewish social gatherings and special occasions. **בְּתַאבון!** (Translation: bon appétit!)