

Morsels & More

Cooking and food-related activities and discussions.

- [This Month's Recipes](#)
 - [Food for Thought - SPAM](#)
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What's Cooking in August?

[August food celebrations](#) include Lemon Month, Trail Mix Month, Pineapple Month, Macadamia Nut Month, Kool-Aid Month, Cotton Candy & Corn Dogs Month, and more. Try this month's related recipes and the ["Food for Thought"](#) discussion below.



[Easy Pineapple/Orange Fruit Salad](#)

[Sugar-Frosted Trail Mix](#)

[Diabetic Kool-Aid Popsicles](#)

[Cotton Candy Cake](#)

[Easy Lemon Cookies](#)

[Hawaiian Macadamia Nut Bread](#)

[Hawaiian SPAM Sandwiches](#)

[SPAM Spread Party Pinwheels](#)

[SPAM Musubi](#)

Links to More Hawaiian & SPAM Recipes

- [SPAM Recipe from Hormel](#)
- [SPAM Recipes Roundup](#)
- [332 SPAM Recipes](#)
- [Hawaiian Recipes](#)
- [More Hawaiian Recipes](#)
- [Hawaiian Recipes from Recipe Zaar](#)
- [Hawaiian Recipes from All Recipes](#)



Food for Thought

SPAM - the edible kind

Since we are celebrating a Hawaiian [Theme of the Month](#), SPAM (the food, not the annoying junk e-mail) immediately comes to mind. (SPAM is a favorite food in Hawaii.) Bring in some SPAM and try one of the SPAM recipes above. For something to talk about during your activity, we have put together some interesting SPAM history and trivia.

What is SPAM?

[SPAM](#) is canned, precooked meat made mostly from pork and ham. Like sausage, hot dogs, and bologna, SPAM is considered a "mystery meat," meaning we know what animal the meat comes from, but the cuts of meat (the parts of the animal) used are unknown. [Varieties of SPAM](#) vary by region and include SPAM Classic, SPAM Hot & Spicy, SPAM Less Sodium, SPAM Lite, SPAM Oven Roasted Turkey, Hickory Smoked SPAM, SPAM with Bacon, SPAM with Cheese, SPAM Spread, and even [SPAM Hot Dogs](#).



How Did It All Begin?

SPAM may be famous now, but it wasn't always that way. The fact is that SPAM hails from some rather humble beginnings. Flash back to 1937 in Austin, Minnesota. There wasn't much there, except for a food company called [Hormel](#). However, these good folks were about to hit upon an amazing little recipe - spicy pork and ham packaged in a handy dandy 12-ounce can.

In 1887, George Hormel was an ambitious 27-year-old businessman when, while visiting friends in Austin, Minnesota, he learned of a butcher shop that had closed after a fire. Hormel borrowed \$500 from his boss and reopened the shop. Next, he converted a creamery into a meat market, and by 1893, he controlled most of the meat business in the area. The turn-of-the-century innovation of improved refrigerator train cars allowed Hormel to expand outside the area, and the addition of an ice storage facility at the Hormel plant in 1899 allowed the company to process more meat.

The business continued to grow, and in 1935, Jay Hormel, George's son, added canned chili and [Dinty Moore Beef Stew](#) to the list of products. Two years later, SPAM was added. Because of their long shelf life without refrigeration, the products were perfect staples during the Great Depression and World War II. In its first year of production, SPAM grabbed 18 percent of the market. Nearly 70 years later, more than 6 billion cans of SPAM have been sold.

Origin of SPAM's Name

Jay Hormel, then president of the company, wanted to find a name for the product that was "as distinctive as its taste." He decided to hold a contest and turned to his country club



circle of friends for help. The younger Hormel threw a party at his 170-acre Austin estate and asked guests to "pay" for cocktails by suggesting a name for the new product every time they ordered a drink. "Along about the third or fourth drink they began showing some imagination," the executive later recalled. It was Kenneth Daigneau, a visiting New York radio actor, who suggested the name that was eventually chosen - SPAM. It was a meshing together of the words "spiced" and "ham."

SPAM – Hawaii’s Soul Food

SPAM became popular in Hawaii during World War II. Fresh meat was scarce at the time, so civilians loaded up on SPAM, a brand name C-ration that was well known to GIs. Needing no refrigeration, SPAM soon became one of three items islanders stocked up on (along with toilet paper and rice) during threats of hurricanes, tsunamis, or dockworkers' strikes.



More recently, SPAM was added to McDonald's breakfast menu in Hawaii. [Hawaii's SPAM Cookbook](#) lists recipes for SPAM omelets, SPAM and beans, and SPAM with Japanese radish fermented in a "syrupy" sauce.

But it's the [SPAM musubi](#), introduced in the 1980s, that reigns supreme in delis, 7-Elevens, and Hawaiian restaurants on the mainland. Hawaiians and tourists insist that the [Tamashiro Market](#) in Honolulu serves the absolute best SPAM musubi. And it will only cost you \$1.25. Basically, it is a piece of dried seaweed wrapped around a cake of cooked rice that is topped with a slice of SPAM.

Since 2002, Honolulu has been hosting an annual [SPAM Jam](#). The festival features live music, food, crafts, a Mr. or Ms. SPAM contest, and hula performances. In 2005, a giant SPAM Musubi was the life of the party. It was 313 feet long and required more than 275 pounds of rice, 1,650 slices of SPAM, and 600 feet of the dried seaweed called nori.



SPAM Trivia & Fun Facts

- During WWII, Hormel sold more than half of its output to the U.S. government, which supplied SPAM to the U.S. armed forces and to the U.S.S.R. under the lend-lease program.
- Nikita Khrushchev once said, "Without SPAM, we wouldn't have been able to feed our army."
- SPAM was one of the few meats excluded from the British food rationing that began in World War II and continued for a number of years after the war ended.
- However, the British grew heartily tired of SPAM, hence the [Monty Python skit](#). In the skit, a couple goes into a restaurant, and the wife tries to order something other than SPAM. In the background is a bunch of people singing the praises of SPAM. Pretty soon, the only thing you can hear is the word "SPAM." The word

"SPAM" is mentioned 94 times. Despite its shortness, the sketch became immensely popular. It was because of this commercial that the word "spam" became synonymous with junk mail. No matter how hard you try, you just can't get rid of it.

- Hormel hired George Burns and Gracie Allen to advertise SPAM on their radio show. In the commercial, they urged people to try a "Spamwich or Spambled eggs for an economical lunch."
- The U.S. government would not allow Hormel to call its product "ham" because it was made mostly from pork shoulder instead of the hindquarters.
- Some of the first commercials aired on TV were for SPAM.



- SPAM even has a mascot - [Spammy, a miniature pig](#).
- In the United States alone, 3.6 cans of SPAM are consumed every second, making it the number one product in its category (canned meat) by far.
- SPAM is sold in over 40 countries worldwide. The largest consumers of SPAM are the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Korea.
- In South Korea, stylish [gift boxes](#) are sold which contain six or more cans of SPAM.
- On the island of Guam, more than 16 cans of SPAM are consumed by every person each year. This is the highest SPAM consumption per capita in the world.
- If all the cans of SPAM ever eaten were put end-to-end, they would circle the globe at least ten times.
- By his own account, [Senator Robert Byrd](#) of West Virginia eats a sandwich of SPAM and mayonnaise on white bread three times a week.
- Richard LeFevre holds the world record - eating 6 pounds of SPAM in 12 minutes.
- SPAM is sold in over 99% of U.S. grocery stores.
- SPAM is made in two U.S. locations - Austin, Minnesota, and Fremont, Nebraska. Workers turn out an average of 435 cans of SPAM each minute.



- In 1995, Austin, Minnesota, officially became known as "Spamtown, USA."
- In 2001, Hormel Foods opened the SPAM Museum in Austin, Minnesota.
- Hormel has a SPAM cookbook featuring recipes that might have come from the Monty Python comedy routine. They include Macaroni and Cheese with SPAM, Reubens SPAM Sandwiches, SPAM Salsa, and SPAM Salad with Sesame Dressing.
- A two-ounce serving of SPAM contains 174 calories and 15 grams of fat.
- Today, SPAM varieties include SPAM Lite, SPAM Smoke Flavored, SPAM Less Sodium, SPAM Oven Roasted Turkey, and, of course, just plain SPAM.

Related Activity Ideas

- Read or listen to a clip of the Nightly News about the [bad economy causing a spike in SPAM sales](#).
- Listen to some [SPAM Music](#).
- Plan a SPAM recipe contest or cook-off.

A Site to See - [SPAM](#)
