

HISTORY OF DOUGHNUTS Reading Comprehension

Fried dough has been made all around the world. Dutch settlers who brought apple and cream pies, cookies, and cobbler to the New World also introduced doughnuts. Their doughnuts were called “olykoeks,” or oily cakes—sweet dough balls fried in pork fat. Early doughnuts were often filled with apples, prunes, or raisins. The name “doughnut” may refer to the nuts put in the middle of the dough ball to prevent an uncooked center or possibly to “dough knots”—another popular shape for the olykoeks. Today, “doughnut” and “donut” are used interchangeably.

There are three stories about why doughnuts have holes in the center. In 1847, Elizabeth Gregory was known for making a very fine olykoek with a hint of nutmeg and a filling of hazelnuts or walnuts. Her son, Hanson Crockett Gregory, was a 16-year-old sailor who invented the doughnut hole.

One story says that on June 22, 1847, Captain Gregory’s ship hit a sudden storm. He impaled the doughnut as a spoke on the steering wheel to keep his hands free. The spoke drove a hole through the raw center of the doughnut. Captain Gregory liked the doughnuts better that way, and the doughnut hole was born.

In the second story, he didn't like nuts, so he poked them out and ordered the ship's cook to remove the centers from doughnuts.

The third version comes from an interview with Captain Gregory in the Washington Post. Gregory didn't like the greasiness of doughnuts twisted into various shapes, or the raw center of regular doughnuts. He suddenly had the idea to punch a hole with the ship's tin pepper box. When he got home, he taught this new doughnut trick to his mother.

Making a hole increased the surface area exposed to the hot oil and eliminated the uncooked center.

Here's part of the interview with 85-year-old Captain Gregory:

"Now in them days we used to cut the doughnuts into diamond shapes, and also into long strips, bent in half, and then twisted. I don't think we called them doughnuts then—they was just 'fried cakes' and 'twisters.'

Well, sir, they used to fry all right around the edges, but when you had the edges done the insides was all raw dough. And the twisters used to sop up all the grease just where they bent, and they were tough on the digestion.

Well, I says to myself, 'Why wouldn't a space inside solve the difficulty?' I thought at first I'd take one of the strips and roll it around, then I got an inspiration, a great inspiration. I took the cover off the ship's tin pepper box, and—I cut into the middle of that doughnut the first hole ever seen by mortal eyes!

Well, sir, them doughnuts was the finest I ever tasted. No more indigestion—no more greasy sinkers—but just well-done, fried-through doughnuts.”

1.) What could be a title for this passage?

- a.) Donuts Around the World
- b.) How the Donut Changed Over Time
- c.) Nicknames for Donuts
- d.) The First Bakery

2.) Why do you think the Washington Post interviewed Captain Gregory?

- a.) They wanted to know the places he had sailed to.
- b.) They believed someone else invented the doughnut hole.
- c.) They wanted to know how the doughnut hole came into being.
- d.) They were interested in why doughnuts were so greasy.

3.) Captain Gregory...

- a.) improved the doughnut.
- b.) invented the doughnut.
- c.) added filling to the doughnut.
- d.) brought the donut to America.

4.) What inspired Captain Gregory?

- a.) He wanted to think of a new name for doughnuts.
- b.) The idea of starting a bakery.
- c.) The idea that he could put filling in the doughnut.
- d.) The idea of cutting a hole into the center of the doughnut.

5.) The first doughnuts brought to America by the Dutch were...

- a.) yellow
- b.) bitter
- c.) oily
- d.) sour

6.) Which of the following items was not introduced by the Dutch?

- a.) cream pies
- b.) ice cream
- c.) cookies
- d.) cobbler

7.) Doughnuts were originally made with nuts in the center to...

- a.) make the doughnuts less oily.
- b.) make the doughnuts easier to fry.
- c.) make sure the center was fully cooked.
- d.) make the doughnuts taste less doughy.

8.) Which of the following was NOT a nickname for doughnuts as described by Captain Gregory?

- a.) greasy sinkers
- b.) olykoeks
- c.) twisters
- d.) fried cakes

9.) What does the word "introduced" mean in the following sentence:

Fried dough has been made all around the world. Dutch settlers who brought apple and cream pies, cookies, and cobbler to the New World also **introduced** doughnuts.

- a.) made
- b.) discovered
- c.) brought to a new place
- d.) fought

10.) Which of the following is definitely TRUE about doughnut holes?

- a.) The doughnut hole was invented inside a pepper box.
- b.) The doughnut hole was invented as a result of a bad storm at sea.
- c.) The doughnut hole was invented by a sailor.
- d.) The doughnut hole was invented to make it taste better.