



Fast Foods of the Fifties Start Here

Restaurants were different in the 1940s and 50s than they are today, but that started to change in 1955 when a man named Ray Kroc opened his first McDonald's in **DES PLAINES**, Illinois. Today McDonald's has more than 30,000 restaurants in 119 countries. With that many restaurants, McDonald's has to buy a lot of meat, vegetables, and dairy from farmers.



Whoa! Why are soybeans on this grocery list? There are no soybeans in a Happy Meal, right? Wrong-o Daddy-o. French fries are often cooked in oil that comes from soybeans. Chances are those soybeans come from your neck of the woods. After all, Illinois farmers grow more soybeans than almost any other state.



Fifties Flicks and Popcorn Picks

In the 1950s, many people loved to go to drive-ins where they could watch outdoor movies from their cars. One of the favorite snacks at the drive-in was popcorn.

Popcorn is still a favorite treat today. In 2003, it became the official state snack of Illinois thanks to the hard work of some second and third graders in **JOLIET**. And why shouldn't popcorn be our official snack? There are more than 300 popcorn farms in the state. Illinois farmers grow so much popcorn that we are the third largest popcorn producer in the nation.

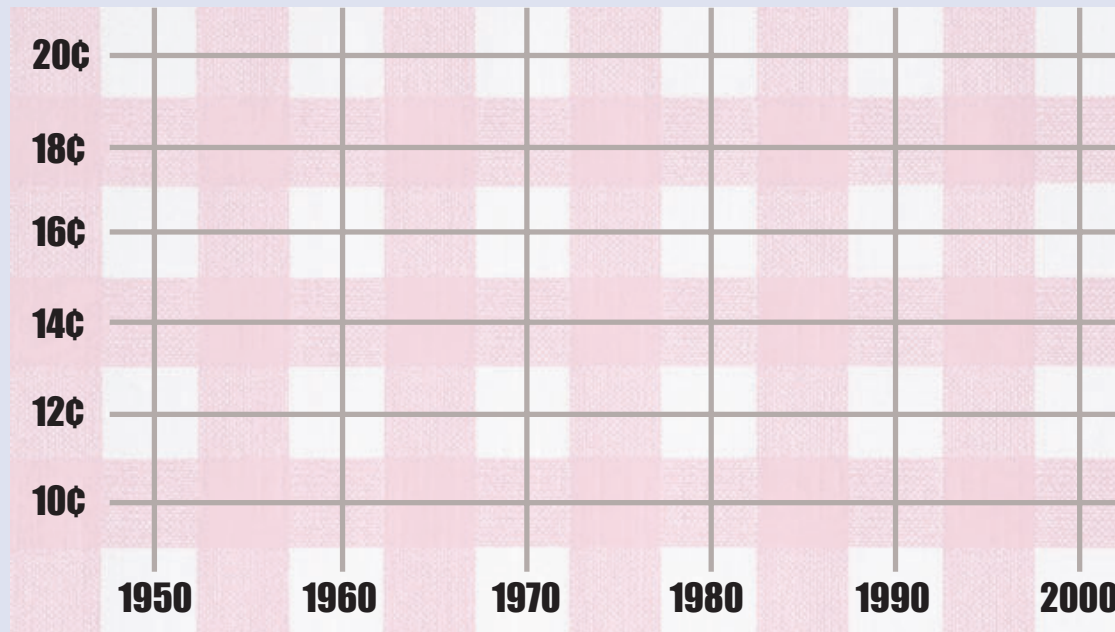
These Food Prices Are Neat-O

Here's a riddle. If a McDonald's hamburger cost 15¢ in 1955 and costs about \$1 now, how can it be more *affordable* today?

Tricky question, huh? Here's how. Food prices have increased, but not as much as job salaries. For every dollar people earned in 1950, they spent 20¢ of it to buy food. Today, we can buy the same amount of food and spend only 10¢ of every dollar earned.

One reason food is more affordable now is because farmers have become more efficient. They grow more crops and livestock using less money and land. That's good news for everyone who eats!

Make a "Now and Then" Chart



Use this empty chart to show how food has become more affordable. With your finger, follow the "1950" line up the chart until you reach the "20¢" line. Use your pencil to make a dot where those two lines meet. Repeat this step and use these dates and numbers:

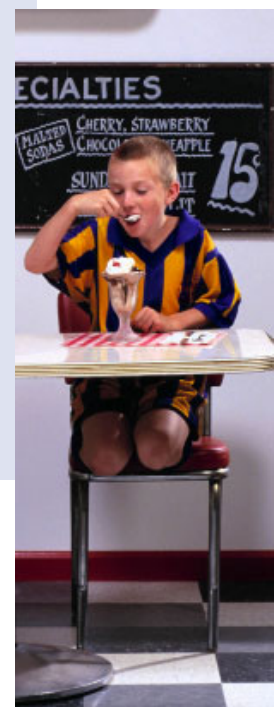
1950	20¢
1960	18¢
1970	14¢
1980	13¢
1990	12¢
2000	10¢

Connect the dots with a line that goes left to right. Look at the chart and guess how the line will look in another 50 years.

Will it go up or down?

Will it ever reach "0"?

Why or why not?



This Corn Is Like Crazy, Baby

In the mid-1950s, scientists invented a new kind of sweetener made from corn grown right here in Illinois. That was good news for food companies who could use it instead of sugar.

We still use this special corn syrup today to sweeten everything from sodas to candy. In fact, Illinois is famous for its sticky sweets. There are more than 100 companies in Illinois making hundreds of different kinds of candy.

Laffy Taffy is one of those candies. It is made in **ITASCA**, Illinois. Look at the ingredients on a piece of Laffy Taffy. What is the first ingredient? That's right, corn syrup! Corn syrup is listed first because that's the largest ingredient. Keep looking. Do you see soybeans? Soybeans are made into a special oil that holds the ingredients together. Illinois farmers grow much of the corn and soybeans that go into some of your favorite treats.

Can you name other candies made in Illinois? Do they have ingredients that come from farms too?



Gas Up That Hot Rod

The fifties was a neat time for cars. They were big, sleek, colorful, and a lot of fun. Oops, they used a lot of gas too. Since then, cars have become more fuel-efficient, and the gasoline has improved too. Today, gasoline can be made from corn. It's called ethanol and it helps your car run smoothly. Soybeans can now be made into diesel fuel too. It's good for busses, semi trucks, and tractors.

These modern fuels are good because they help keep our air clean and help us buy less oil for other countries. Best of all, these fuels are renewable. If we run out, we can grow more corn or soybeans.

Illinois has many factories that turn corn into fuel. One factory in **EDWARDSVILLE** can make 50,000 gallons of ethanol in 100 days.



ICE CREAM WITH CHOCOLATE SYRUP

The ice cream sundae was invented in **EVANSTON**, Illinois in 1881°. Ice cream comes from milk. Milk comes from a female dairy cow that has given birth to a calf and is able to produce milk. Milk must be processed to make it safe for us to drink. First it is pasteurized, - or heated quickly - to kill germs, and then rapidly cooled. Then it is homogenized. Homogenization breaks the milk fat globules into tiny particles so they are dispersed evenly though the milk.



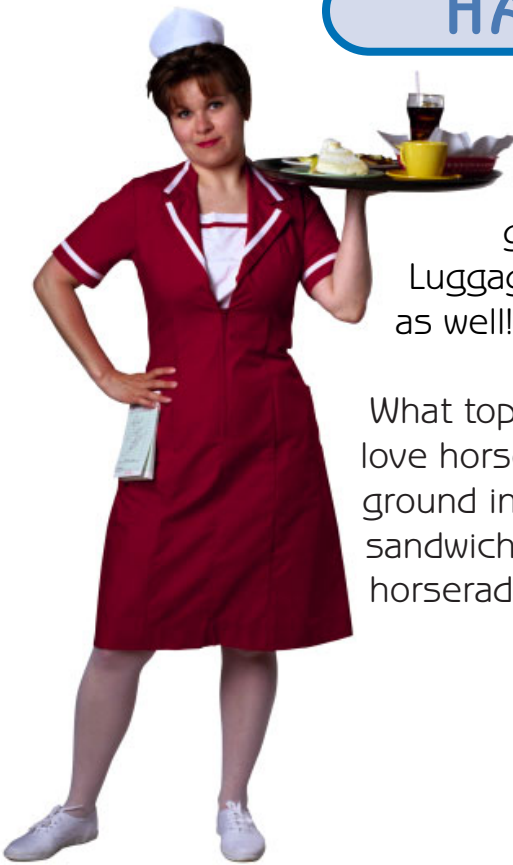
BACON AND EGGS

When you think of a traditional breakfast, do you think of eggs and bacon? Each year, Illinois farmers produce more than 800 million chicken eggs. But as you know, we get more than eggs from that chicken! We eat a lot more chicken and poultry than we did 50 years ago.



You can find one of the nation's top bacon companies right here in Illinois. Oscar Mayer is located in **CHICAGO**, Illinois. If you laid the pieces of bacon that Oscar Mayer sells every year end-to-end it could stretch around the earth 101 times.

HAMBURGER WITH ONIONS



Hamburgers are a great source of ZIP: Zinc, Iron, and Protein. All of these are part of a healthy diet. More than 1.4 million cattle grow on Illinois farms. But we get more than top quality meat from beef cattle.

Luggage, camera film, and car polishes are beef by-products as well!

What toppings do you like on your hamburger? Many people love horseradish on their burgers. Horseradish is a root that is ground into a hot, tangy condiment, perfect for all kinds of sandwiches. Illinois farmers near **COLLINSVILLE** grow more horseradish than anywhere else in the world.

FRENCH FRIED POTATOES

Not all potatoes come from Idaho. Some are grown near Illinois towns like **GREENVILLE**. It takes more than potatoes to make french fries. Potatoes need hot oil to make them golden brown and crunchy. Typically french fries are fried in soybean oil. Illinois grows more soybeans than most states, and **DECATUR** is called the Soybean Capital of the World. Soybean oil and soybean meal can also be found in many of the foods that you eat each day.

This issue of Ag Mag has been by



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