



Toasting the Toaster: Humble Kitchen Workhorse Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Facts

- The first electric toaster was most likely invented in 1905, which is the year Albert Marsh developed the Nichrome wire, making the electric toaster possible. The first toaster had a colorful name, “El Tosto.”
- The first U.S. patent for an electric toaster was made in 1909 by General Electric for an appliance that was nothing more than exposed heating elements surrounded by a wire cage to hold the bread. This model, the D-12, is considered the first commercially successful toaster in U.S. history.
- The toaster did not really take off until after 1933 when sliced bread was invented, which makes it official: historically speaking, the toaster is the next best thing since sliced bread.
- The first ever fully-automatic pop-up toaster is the Toastmaster one-A-one, invented in 1926. It was not cheap. In today’s dollars this would have gone for \$150 and was a prized wedding gift.
- To document innovation, design and the impact of electricity on the household and family, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History has close to 100 non-electric and electric toasters in its collections, ranging from the 18th century to the 1980s.
- Recent Toaster Collector Conventions: 2005 Rochester, MN; 2004 Toledo, OH; 2003 Richmond, VA; 2000 Akron, OH; 1999 Columbia, SC.
- Nearly every home in America has a toaster. Average household spends 35 hours a year making toast.
- An estimated 75 million Americans eat toast everyday.
- The process that caramelizes toast—cooking the sugars in the bread and turning them golden brown—begins at 310 degrees Fahrenheit and is called the Maillard reaction, which gives toast its flavor and its crunch.
- November is National Bread Month. The Grain Foods Foundation is marking the occasion by celebrating the 100th anniversary of the invention of the electric toaster.
- Bread has essential vitamins and nutrients, which may help prevent heart disease and some cancers. It also provides fuel needed for energy.
- Enriched grains, found in white bread, contain twice the amount of folic acid as whole grains. Folic acid intake is especially critical to women of child-bearing age as it may help prevent birth defects. Grain foods are the largest source of folic acid in the American diet.

Toast resources:

Recipes and more information: www.grainpower.org

Toaster Museum Foundation—www.toaster.org

Buy and sell vintage toasters—www.toastercentral.com

Cookbook: *Toast; 60 Ways to Butter Your Bread and Then Some*; Jesse Ziff Cool

Comedian/songwriter, “Toast” song, Children’s book author of “Toast!”: Heywood Banks, Howell, Michigan; www.ComedyHome.com