



Ketchup....

Ketchup. Catsup. Wait. What?

Whether you spell it with a K or with a C, Ketchup is undoubtedly as American as Baseball and Apple Pie. But why the two spellings? Where did this ruby condiment come from? It has taken some heat recently for being laden with high-fructose corn syrup, but with organic and natural varieties hitting the shelves, maybe it's time to take a closer look at what is practically a national treasure. And to some people, a life necessity.

The first printed recordings of Ketchup go back to 1690. Yup, that is over 320 years of this sweet topper. However, the first versions didn't look quite what you squeeze out of a plastic bottle today....The very first concoctions were a blend of puréed anchovies, walnuts, mushrooms, kidney beans, and sometimes oysters. Mmmmmmmmm....um. What? That's right. While there was a recipe recorded for it in 1727 by a woman in Great Britain, it took another hundred years before a New Englander (go East Coast!) had the clever thought to add tomatoes to the mix, and thus, the modern start of ketchup began.

1876 rolls around...and with it? That's right, Mr. Heinz and his still famous ketchup recipe. There are many people today who swear by it and will spend the extra money for this brand over competitors and generics even when they buy generics for everything else. With the popularity of his ketchup came the competition...using names like Catchup, Katsup, Catsip, Cotsup, Kotchup, Kitsip, Catsoup, Katshoup, Katsock, Cackchop, Cornchop, Cotpock, Kotpock, Kutpuck, Kutchpuck and Cutchpuck. Wow. Only two survived: Hunts and Del Monte and the three to this day remain in a tug of war for a ketchup monopoly over America.

There was a brief push by Heinz to promote itself as an "antioxidant" because of the lycopene in the tomatoes found in the ketchup...however, this notion was quickly dispelled when it was revealed just how MUCH ketchup one would have to consume in order to reap any health benefits at all from the lycopene. And then....the high-fructose corn syrup. Yes. Our nation's beloved condiment is one of the numerous "bad" syrup carriers. Hunts has recently come out with a recipe that does not contain it, but there is still a high amount of sugar. What is your best bet?

Krazy Ketchup! No, seriously. No HFCS, no sugar, all organic, and only sweetened with agave, which has almost zero effects on the body's blood sugar levels. There you go! So go ahead, keep ketchup in your life...because I'm sure you and the 97% of other American households that have it in their cupboards...would be pretty lost without it.