From the Editors of NaturalNews.com

25 AMAZING (AND WEIRD) FACTS ABOUT

HOW FOOD IS MADE

AND WHERE IT COMES FROM

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AMAZING FACT #1

Tuna labeled "dolphin safe" may still have been caught with practices involving the deliberate and life-threatening harassment of dolphins.

Starting the late 1980s, cans of tuna sporting "dolphin safe" labels started to appear in U.S. grocery stores. Brands carrying these labels were preferentially purchased by consumers appalled by fishing practices that had led to the death of 8 million dolphins since the 1960s—namely, the deliberate encirclement and netting of dolphins in the Eastern Pacific, who tend to swim with schools of yellowfin tuna.

But not all dolphin safe labels are created equal. Earth Island Institute, the originator of the first and most widely used dolphin safe label, warns of two in particular: those from the U.S. Department of Commerce and those from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC, also known as AIDCP-APICD). Both organizations actively promote chasing and netting dolphins, and their labels do not guarantee that these practices were not used. Mexican tuna companies may also display dolphin safe labels even though they use dolphin netting practices.

Furthermore, non-dolphin-encircling tuna fishing practices may still net dolphins, sea turtles and other sea life as "accidental bycatch," most of which is not reported by monitors—and this tuna, too, can be labeled dolphin safe.

Sources:

http://www.allaboutwildlife.com/dolphins-whales/the-disturbing-facts-about-dolphin-safe-tuna/4298

http://www.earthisland.org/dolphinSafeTuna/consumer/IATTClabelAlert.html

http://www.earthisland.org/dolphinSafeTuna/consumer/USDAlabelAlert.html

AMAZING FACT #2

Real maple syrup is just the boiled sap of a maple tree.

To be sold under the name "maple syrup" in the United States, a product must contain nothing but the concentrated sap of the maple tree, with the exception of certain minor approved additives such as salt. Products labeled as Vermont Maple Syrup may have no additives at all.

Maple syrup production begins by drilling one to three holes into the trunk of maple trees during the early spring, when the sap begins to rise. A metal or plastic spout is then inserted into each hole, so that the sugary sap can run out of it and either into a bucket or into plastic tubing, depending on the collection method. Because the sap is only 2 percent sucrose by weight, it is then boiled, evaporated or otherwise has excess water removed to increase the sugar concentration to 66.9 percent. Mineral solids are then filtered out, but not the natural mineral enzymes that give maple syrup its distinctive flavor.

Sources:

http://vermontmaple.org/make-maple-syrup.php

http://vermontmaple.org/maple-faq.php

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maple_syrup

AMAZING FACT #3

Frying potatoes to make chips or French fries produces high levels of a potent carcinogen called acrylamide.

It's not just the high fat content that makes potato chips and French fries bad for you; the very process used to cook them produces potent carcinogens inside the potatoes themselves. Baking, roasting or frying any starchy food at high temperatures causes an the sugars found in these foods to combine with an amino acid to produce high levels of a potent carcinogen known as acrylamide. Because all potato chips must be cooked at high heat, and because restaurants tend to cook French fries at high temperatures to bring them to the table more quickly, a healthy diet should contain only minimal quantities of these foods.

For people willing to go to a little extra effort to make French fries at home, there are ways to minimize acrylamide content. Potatoes should be stored outside of the refrigerator in a cool, dark place. Before frying, they should be sliced, soaked in water for 15-30 minutes, then patted dry. They should be fried at lower temperatures for less time, until they are golden yellow—not brown.

Sources:

http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FoodContaminantsAdulteration/ChemicalContaminants/Acrylamide/ucm151000.htm

AMAZING FACT #4

Jell-O molds cannot be made with certain fresh fruits, because they contain enzymes that destroy the proteins in the gelatin and prevent it from setting.

Jell-O molds made with pineapple are practically a U.S. cultural icon, so many people may be surprised to learn that if you try to make a Jell-O mold with fresh or frozen pineapple, the mold will never set. Only canned pineapple can be used. In fact, according to the label on a box of Jell-O mix, fresh or frozen pineapple, figs, gingerroot, guava, kiwi or papaya will all prevent the gelatin dessert from setting.

This occurs because all these fruits contain enzymes known as proteases, meaning that they break apart protein. Gelatin is primarily composed of the animal protein collagen, the major component of connective tissue. When the collagen in gelatin is heated and mixed with water, it naturally gels. Proteases such as those found in pineapple, however, break apart the collagen and make gelling impossible. This is why pineapple is sometimes used as a meat tenderizer: the protease bromelain partially dissolves the proteins in meat, making it easier to chew.

Sources:

http://homechemistry.blogspot.com/2008/03/breaking-molecular-bonds-jello-and.html

AMAZING FACT #5

Popcorn pops due to superheated, pressurized steam that forms inside the kernel.

Corn (maize) is nearly unique among grass species in that its seed has a strong, moisture-resistant hull, surrounding an interior composed almost entirely of hard, dense starch. It is this combination of traits that allows popcorn to pop.

Popcorn is simply a specialized breed of corn known as flint corn, which has an especially hard outer kernel. When popcorn kernels are heated in a pot, the water inside the kernel naturally heats up as well, turning into steam. Because the steam cannot escape through the moisture-proof kernel, it soon becomes pressurized and then superheated. This superheated steam cooks the hard starches in the kernel into a soft, gelatinous mass. A constant influx of heat from the pot keeps increasing the heat and pressure inside the kernel up to roughly 135 pounds per square inch, at which point the kernel finally ruptures. The released steam then expands rapidly, filling the gelatinized starch with air. With the steam gone, the starch cools rapidly and solidifies into the familiar popped corn shape.

Sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popcorn

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flint_corn

AMAZING FACT #6

The casings of most sausages and hot dogs are made out of dissolved, homogenized cowhides that are then extruded into a solid tube.

Originally, sausages were made by stuffing an animal's pureed internal organs into its intestines. As sausages shifted from a locally made food to a mass-produced industrial product, it became infeasible to make all sausages with traditional intestine casings. Some sausages are now stuffed into inedible synthetic casings, but for consumers preferring a more natural-seeming food, an alternative edible casing was needed.

Enter collagen, the primary protein that makes up connective tissue in the bodies of humans and other animals. To make collagen sausage casings, the hides of slaughtered cows are set aside and have their hair removed. The hide is then chopped up and mixed with water, lactic acid and cellulose fiber until it swells into a slurry. A vacuum removes air from the slurry, which is then homogenized, re-vacuumed, and pressed into a thin, flat shape. This casing is then coagulated with salt, plasticized with glycerin and dried until it is needed.

Sources:

http://www.askthemeatman.com/what_are_collagen_casings.htm

http://www.ehow.com/about_5305009_types-natural-synthetic-sausage-casings.html

AMAZING FACT #7

Although the corn industry claims that HFCS contains only slightly more fructose than table sugar, it is actually made with an ingredient that is 90 percent fructose.

High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is a popular sweetener because it is chemically different from sugar—it has a longer shelf life and mixes better into beverages. Yet the corn industry likes to play down these differences, pointing out that sugar is 50 percent fructose and 50 percent glucose, while HFCS is 55 percent fructose and 45 percent glucose.

This framing glosses over an essential difference: sugar (sucrose) is a disaccharide composed of a single glucose molecule and a single fructose molecule. HFCS, in contrast, is a liquid solution composed of separated individual glucose and fructose molecules (monosaccharides). To make HFCS, a 100 percent glucose solution is converted via enzymes into a 42 percent fructose-58 percent glucose solution. This solution is further treated until it is 90 percent glucose, then mixed with more 42-58 solution to yield a 55-45 concentration. So while the final ratio of fructose to glucose might look similar to table sugar, it is in fact a very different product. Is it any wonder that HFCS is processed differently by the body?

Sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High-fructose_corn_syrup#Production

AMAZING FACT #8

Mechanically separated meat, a paste made by pulverizing animal carcasses, is used in common products including hot dogs, burgers, lunch meat, Slim Jims and Spam.

Have you ever glanced at the ingredients on a hot dog or a can of Spam Lite and wondered about an ingredient called "mechanically separated chicken" or "mechanically separated meat"? This type of meat is collected from animal carcasses after all the prime cuts of muscle have been removed. In order to not waste the meat scraps still clinging to the bone, slaughterhouses remove the meat either by scraping, pressing or shaving the scraps off the bone, or by simply blasting it with pressurized air or water. The meat comes off in a reddish slurry, which is then mixed into low-grade meat products such as hot dogs and lunchmeat in order to bulk them up.

Other common end products for mechanically separated meat include hamburger, ground beef, canned meat and processed meat products such as Slim Jims. Mechanically separated meat is also known as mechanically recovered meat, mechanically reclaimed meat and mechanically deboned meat.

Sources:

http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/magazine/17-09/st_whatsinside

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/1482140.stm

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Factsheets/Hot_Dogs/index.asp

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanically_separated_chicken

AMAZING FACT #9

Different types of tea are distinguished by when the leaves of the tea plant were harvested and how long the leaves were allowed to age before being dried.

All true tea (green, black, oolong, white and pu-erh) comes from the leaves of the tea plant, Camellia sinensis. What separates the different varieties is how the leaves were processed.

White tea is harvested early, before the leaf buds have even opened fully. It is then air-dried quickly, producing tea with a delicate flavor. All other tea is produced from mature leaves. Green tea leaves are dried immediately after harvesting, before they can begin to oxidize, while leaves for black tea are allowed to sit out and oxidize (a process often incorrectly called fermentation) before drying. Oolong tea is produced from leaves that were not oxidized as long as black tea leaves. These different processes explain the greener, more plant-like taste of green tea and the intermediate flavor of oolong tea.

A fifth type of tea, pu-erh, actually consists of two varieties. Raw pu-erh is a variety of green tea that ages well and need not be used quickly, while ripened pu-erh is made from green tea leaves that have truly been fermented.

Sources:

http://www.imperialteagarden.com/teas.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puer_tea

AMAZING FACT #10

McDonald's French fries contain a chemical flavoring agent synthesized in a laboratory.

The third listed ingredient in McDonald's French fries is "natural beef flavor." At first glance, that might not sound so bad, unless you're a vegetarian. But if you look closer, you'll see a note that the flavor is made with both wheat and dairy derivatives. Wheat and dairy, in a flavor presumably derived from beef?

That's because "natural flavors" are anything but natural. The only difference between "natural flavors" and "artificial flavors" is that the latter are completely synthesized in a lab, while the former are intensively extracted from food products. In other words, the exact same chemical may be classified as natural or artificial, depending on the techniques used by the lab that made it.

In this case, the toxic food derivatives hydrolyzed wheat and hydrolyzed soy are used as a base for a "natural" chemical that gives McDonald's fries their flavor. Originally, McDonald's cooked its French fries in beef tallow, but the company abandoned this practice in 1990 due to growing health concern from consumers. To preserve the characteristic taste of one of its most profitable products, McDonald's turned to chemicals.

Sources:

http://www.rense.com/general7/whyy.htm

http://myyearwithout.blogspot.com/2008/04/french-fry-ingredients-from-your.html

AMAZING FACT #11

Traditional pickles are made by immersing cucumbers or other vegetables in briny water, then allowing them to ferment. This produces a potent health food that resists spoiling for months on end.

"Pickling" refers to preserving food by immersing it in acid. Although many pickles are now made with vinegar (acetic acid), traditionally they were made by immersing vegetables in salt water and allowing them to ferment. Probiotic bacteria would produce lactic acid, which would in turn preserve the vegetables and turn them into "pickles."

That means that like many other fermented foods, raw pickles are full of healthy probiotics that improve digestive and immune health. The pickling process increases the vitamin C concentration of foods and creates nutrients that help boost your body's iron absorption. Pickled foods made with vinegar (ideally as an adjunct to traditional raw pickling) also boost the immune system, aid the digestive system, improve joint and bone health and blood pressure, and fight urinary infections. Traditional pickles are also made with mustard and turmeric, which are potent superfoods. To find raw (unpasteurized) pickles, look in the refrigerated section of your grocery store.

Sources:

http://www.healthandsoul.com/spice-your-life-with-healthy-pickle.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pickled_cucumber

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pickling

AMAZING FACT #12

Mead is just fermented honey water.

While not widely consumed in the United States today, mead is perhaps the most ancient of fermented beverages, and certainly one of the most versatile. Whereas all other fermented beverages are made from plants that must be either wild-harvested or deliberately cultivated (grapes or other fruits, corn or other grains, etc.), mead is made from a wild food that humans have been eating since long before the development of agriculture: honey. Mead remains one of the simplest alcoholic beverages to make at home, without the intensive processing required to make beer or the separation of juice from pulp required for fruit wines and ciders.

All alcohol production requires sugars that can be consumed by yeast, and honey is humans' most ancient source of concentrated sugar. The simplest meads are made just by mixing honey with water and letting it ferment. Because mead is such an ancient beverage, however, numerous modifications have been developed over the millennia. It can now be made with grain and hops (like beer), with fruit (like wines and ciders), or even with added spices.

Sources:

http://www.stormthecastle.com/mead/index.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mead

AMAZING FACT #13

Even tuna that is actually dolphin safe is still caught using fishing practices that kill 100,000 tons of sea turtles, sharks, rays, and other "bycatch" every year, and that are pushing tuna itself toward extinction.

Although the vast majority of canned tuna sold in the United States is no longer caught using practices that involve the deliberate harassment and netting of dolphins, tuna fishing is still one of the most destructive aquatic industries in the world. The most popular modern tuna-fishing method is called a fish aggregation device (FAD), which uses lures to attract and net tuna in huge quantities. For every 10 kilograms of tuna caught, another 1 kilogram of "bycatch" (non-tuna) species are netted and killed, including sea turtles, sharks and dolphins. Many of these species are endangered.

"Bycatch" issues aside, tuna are some of the most over-exploited fish on the planet. Of the 23 tuna stocks in the world, three are classified as vulnerable to extinction, six are considered endangered or critically endangered, four are considered overexploited or depleted and nine are considered fully fished. FADs also appear to interfere with the life cycle of tuna that are not even caught, luring them away from their migratory routes and causing them to become malnourished. For all these reasons, Greenpeace UK suggests that only tuna caught with pole or line methods be bought or sold.

Sources:

http://www.allaboutwildlife.com/dolphins-whales/the-disturbing-facts-about-dolphin-safe-tuna/4298

http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/usa/press-center/reports4/canned-tuna-s-hidden-catch.pdf

AMAZING FACT #14

Most margarines on the market are made with milk, making them unsuitable for vegans or those with dairy allergies.

People expecting guests who cannot eat dairy products (either due to allergies or simply dietary preferences) often turn to margarine as a dairy-free butter substitute, perhaps assuming that only a dairy aversion would cause someone to prefer margarine over butter. In fact, most margarine and "buttery spreads" on the market are still made with dairy ingredients, although dairy-free versions are available.

Margarine was initially developed as a low-cost alternative to butter and became popular in the United States during World War II, when dairy products were rationed. In order to make margarine as similar to butter as possible, however, the product has long been made with small amounts of dairy. When margarine was rebranded as a health food after World War II, there was still no need to make it dairy free. To this day, people seeking butter alternatives still need to read labels carefully to avoid not just dairy byproducts, but a load of toxic hydrogenated oils (trans fats).

Sources:

http://www.labelwatch.com/prod_results.php?pid=361005

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margarine

AMAZING FACT #15

The “soy sauce” packets you get at most Chinese restaurants are actually a toxic chemical imitation, also marketed as “liquid amino acids.”

Asian cultures have traditionally fermented soy before eating it to make it easier on the body, and soy sauce is no exception. Fermentation takes three to six months, however, so impatient industrial food producers have developed an alternative product, disparagingly called “chemical soy sauce” by food aficionados. Rather than soy beans, the product is based on hydrolyzed soy protein (a form of MSG) derived from soybeans defatted using the toxic chemical hexane. This soy protein is then chemically processed to increase the concentration of the amino acid glutamate, which gives soy sauce its characteristic savoriness. Finally, flavoring chemicals are added to round out the taste. The whole process takes only three days, but speed comes at a cost: the final product is nothing but glorified MSG and contains carcinogens not found in real soy sauce.

Chemical soy sauce is most commonly found in the little packets given out for free by restaurants. Repackaged as a “health food,” it is also marketed in stores as “liquid amino acids.”

Sources:

http://www.koreanrestaurantguide.com/health/health_soy.htm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soy_sauce#Production

http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/webpage/13dcpsoy

AMAZING FACT #16

Gelatin, the base in Jell-O and related deserts, is made by boiling down the skins, cartilage and bones of mammals such as cows and pigs.

Have you ever wondered what makes Jell-O gel? The answer is gelatin, also a major ingredient in gummy bears, marshmallows and many other candies. Gelatin is composed primarily of amino acids, and is derived from the connective protein known as collagen. Gelatin's primary ingredients are the skins, cartilage and bones of animals including cattle, pigs and fish. Contrary to popular myth, gelatin cannot be made from hooves, which are composed mostly of keratin.

To make gelatin, skin and bone byproducts of meat and leather production are treated either with acid or hot water to remove mineral salts. They are then treated again in acid or boiling water to break down the collagen from the rest of the carcass. Extensive processing via filtration, drying, evaporation, grinding and sifting eventually separates the collagen into the white powder sold under the name gelatin.

A form of gelatin can also be made at home, simply by boiling cartilaginous chunks of meat or bone and then allowing the water to cool into a jelly-like mixture.

Sources:

http://www.gelatin-gmia.com/html/qanda.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gelatin

AMAZING FACT #17

A company named Senomyx is using genetic technology to develop chemicals that directly interfere with the tongue's taste receptors, then adding them to food without listing them as ingredients.

Biotechnology company Senomyx is exploiting regulatory loopholes to add untested new additives to your food, in collaboration with Kraft, Campbell Soup, Pepsi and other food giants. The company claims to have reverse engineered the human genome and is now adding "artificial flavors" to our food supply that directly block or activate taste receptors on your tongue. This allows companies to trumpet their products as "low salt" or "low sugar" without changing the flavor.

Why is Senomyx allowed to use genetic technology without warning consumers? The biotech compounds operate in such small quantities that they can easily gain FDA approval under antiquated food safety laws designed before the biotech age. Indeed, these biotech additives don't even need to be listed as anything but "artificial flavor"!

Unsurprisingly, both Senomyx and its food industry partners are being secretive about which foods contain these ingredients.

How can you defend yourself against being a guinea pig in a giant genetic experiment? Buy only foods with no additives whatsoever.

Sources:

http://www.naturalnews.com/022982.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senomyx

http://www.senomyx.com/flavor_programs/appTech.htm

AMAZING FACT #18

HFCS manufacture begins with starch extracted from genetically modified corn.

With all the corn industry propaganda out there about how high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is a natural sweetener, you might be forgiven for thinking HFCS is simply squeezed out of a corn plant like sugar from sugar cane. This couldn't be further from the truth.

The first step in making HFCS involves turning corn kernels into corn starch. Since more than 80 percent of all corn grown in the United States is genetically modified (GM), and since corn from different fields is all mixed together in huge silos before processing, this means that basically 100 percent of HFCS is GM. The GM corn is fermented slightly until the germ and endosperm can be separated and ground separately, then both components are washed repeatedly until the starch can be removed and dried. This starch will then be boiled, distilled, and mixed with enzymes to break it down into a 100 percent glucose solution known as corn syrup. But even all this is only a first step: this "normal" corn syrup will later be intensively processed to make the final product, HFCS.

Sources:

http://www.sprol.com/2005/10/high-fructose-corn-syrup

http://theemergencyfoodsupply.com/archives/93-percent-of-soybeans-and-80-percent-of-corn-in-the-u-s-grow-from-seeds-genetically-altered-by-monsanto

http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/BiotechCrops

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corn_starch

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corn_syrup

AMAZING FACT #19

MSG is made by concentrating a natural flavor enhancer far beyond the levels normally found in non-synthetic foods.

The food industry continues to claim that MSG is a perfectly safe if not natural food, pointing out that it merely triggers the tongue's receptors for the fifth taste ("umami" or "savory"). These receptors are triggered by the protein glutamate, which naturally occurs in certain staple foods and condiments worldwide, especially fermented ones. Indeed, cooks around the world have traditionally turned to glutamate-rich foods such as soy sauce or tomato paste to give their dishes a fuller, more satisfying flavor.

The food industry's desire for a concentrated burst of umami led to the development of monosodium glutamate (MSG), a powdered glutamate salt that can be added directly to food. In contrast to the low concentrations of glutamate (mixed with other natural food chemicals) found in many healthy traditional foods, MSG is pure concentrated glutamate in a new chemical packaging. No matter what name MSG goes under—and it has pseudonyms aplenty, designed to fool health-conscious consumers—it's still an artificial additive made with toxic chemicals to artificially boost the glutamate content in food. There's nothing natural about that.

Sources:

http://www.naturalnews.com/029134_umami_MSG.html

AMAZING FACT #20

All olive oil is still made by physically crushing fresh olives and then decanting the oil out from the rest of the fruit.

In this age of industrial food, in which seemingly natural products often turn out to be processed with or even entirely synthesized from artificial chemicals, it's refreshing to find a food that is still produced in a nearly traditional way. Olive oil is one such food.

In contrast to many seed oils, the oil from olives can only be extracted by physically crushing the fruit in a mechanical press. Although ancient Mediterranean peoples used giant stone presses rather than modern industrial machinery, the physical process of crushing olives still looks much the same as it did several thousand years ago. After crushing, the olive paste may either be further pressed (the traditional method) or spun in a centrifuge (modern method) to separate the oil. Neither method involves added chemicals. A third, also mechanical, method involves dipping metal plates into the olive paste and then scraping off the oil as it sticks to the metal.

Sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive_oil_extraction

AMAZING FACT #21

Citrus-flavored sodas and sports drinks are made with a toxic chemical—brominated vegetable oil—that is banned in more than 100 countries.

Citrus-flavored beverages in the United States and Canada, from sodas such as Squirt and Mountain Dew to sports drinks such as Gatorade, are made with an additive called brominated vegetable oil that has been banned as toxic in more than 100 countries. And no wonder: bromine is deadly in its pure liquid or gaseous forms, and smaller quantities can build up in the fat cells of the body to produce cancer and thyroid dysfunction over time. In spite of the FDA's assurances that brominated vegetable oil is used only in minute quantities, cases of acute bromine poisoning have been documented in people who consumed large quantities of soda daily. This suggests that even lower consumption levels might pose a risk of more subtle effects, such as cancer.

So why do soda companies use this toxic additive? Since citrus flavorings have such a different density than sugar water, citrus-flavored drinks would be cloudy and visually unappealing without some additive that binds the two components of the drink together. Bromine fills that function admirably—but at a heavy cost.

Sources:

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/823337/the_dangers_of_the_additive_brominated.html

http://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/1999/jul/29/what-brominated-vegetable-oil-and-why-do-soda-comp

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brominated_vegetable_oil

http://fooddemocracy.wordpress.com/2009/07/29/bvo-brominated-vegetable-oil-toxic-additive-in-many-sports-drinks-and-sodas

AMAZING FACT #22

Starting at the age of 30 or 40, a maple tree can be tapped for syrup yearly without causing it any harm.

Until a maple tree is 30 to 40 years old, it cannot be tapped for syrup without hurting it. Once it has reached this mature age, however, a maple can sustain between one and three tapholes every year, depending on the size of its trunk. Each tree can then yield about 10 gallons of sap a year, which produces between a fifth and a third of a gallon of syrup. Because this comes out to only about 7 percent of the tree's sap, the tree can survive yearly tapping from then on.

Studies by the North American Maple Project have continuously monitored individual Vermont maple trees for 20 years of tapping without detecting any signs of harm. No differences in health were observed between trees that had been tapped yearly for two decades and trees that had never been tapped. Other studies have suggested that maples can be safely tapped until they are more than 100 years old.

Sources:

http://vermontmaple.org/maple-faq.php

http://www.buzzle.com/articles/maple-tree-facts.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maple_syrup

AMAZING FACT #23

Texturized soy protein may contain toxic cottonseeds.

There are plenty of reasons to avoid texturized soy protein, also known as textured vegetable protein or TVP. It is made from genetically modified soy that has been processed with toxic chemicals until it is simply a fibrous mass of protein that bears no resemblance to real food. Now you can add another reason to your list: much TVP is made with cotton seeds, which are unfit for human consumption.

Although sometimes referred to specifically as "soy protein," TVP is actually made of proteins extracted from a variety of seeds, with soy predominating. Cotton seeds, which are cheap and abundant in the United States, are a popular TVP component. Yet although the FDA allows cotton seeds to be used in food, cotton is not regulated as a food crop. This means that pesticides banned for use on food crops are regularly used on cotton, and other pesticides may be used in higher concentrations than normally allowed. Most cotton is also genetically modified—and to top it off, cottonseeds naturally contain such high levels of the toxin gossypol that the unprocessed seed oil can actually be used as a pesticide in its own right.

Sources:

http://wizbangblue.com/2008/01/26/the-awful-truth-about-cottonseed-oil.php

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textured_soy_protein

AMAZING FACT #24

Yolk colors are strongly influenced by a chicken's diet. To disguise dietary deficiencies, some factory farms feed their hens brightly colored food.

If you have regularly eaten both store-bought chicken eggs and eggs fresh off a small farm (or from your backyard), you might have noticed a difference in the color of the yolks. Eggs from small farms are more likely to have dark yolks, while eggs from factory farms tend to have lighter yolks. This is because factory-farmed chickens are fed a nutrient-poor diet, resulting in inferior yolk.

But you also might not have noticed a difference, because many factory farmers artificially darken the yolk of their eggs in order to avoid alarming consumers. Although a healthy diet produces darker yolk, the color itself comes not from the nutrients but from naturally occurring plant pigments found in the chicken's diet, much as how flamingoes get their color from the pink crustaceans and microorganisms they eat. So you don't actually have to give a hen a better diet to give her eggs darker yolk: you can just feed her more yellow food. Although U.S. law does not permit feeding artificial colors to egg-laying hens, it does permit feeding them marigold petals and other substances added only for their color.

Sources:

http://www.ccfbrands.com/egg-facts?egg_fact_id=20

http://www.wisegeek.com/why-are-chicken-eggs-different-colors.htm

AMAZING FACT #25

Regular corn syrup is 100 percent glucose. It is only the addition of toxic chemicals that turn some of that glucose into fructose to make HFCS.

Have you ever looked at a food label and wondered why it lists both "corn syrup" and "high fructose corn syrup" (HFCS)? In fact, corn syrup and HFCS are two separate substances, with the former needed to make the latter.

Corn syrup is a much older sweetener than HFCS, and is made by an intensive industrial process that involves boiling and distilling corn starch (itself a highly processed food), then adding enzymes to convert the starch into 100 percent glucose. Corn syrup is not as sweet as sugar (which is 50 percent glucose and 50 percent fructose) and does not dissolve well into packaged foods, hence the food industry's "need" for HFCS.

Transforming corn syrup into HFCS is not easy—it requires toxic chemicals to transform some of that glucose into fructose. These additives include glutaraldehyde, which can burn holes in the human stomach, irritate the eyes, lungs and throat, and cause headaches and dizziness. Some of the additives contain the neurotoxin mercury, which often makes its way into the final product.

Sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High-fructose_corn_syrup#Production

http://www.naturalnews.com/025442_HFCS_Corn_Refiners_Association.html

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