

## FACT SHEET

### THE HISTORY OF THE PRETZEL

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#### **Auntie Anne's: 23 Years Old and Stronger Than Ever**

Anne and Jonas Beiler didn't set out to create pretzel perfection when they purchased a Pennsylvania farmer's market stand in 1988. Instead, they hoped to provide free counseling services to families and couples in their community, and purchased the stand to provide the income needed for their vision. After some experimentation and a few mishaps, Anne and Jonas created a pretzel that customers quickly dubbed "better than the best you've ever tasted," which is the same pretzel that is known and loved today.

The popularity of Auntie Anne's pretzels grew first by word of mouth, and then through franchised locations. Auntie Anne's first franchise opened in 1989 at Saturday's Market in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The company experienced steady growth for the next six years, opening stores in 334 domestic locations in 33 states. In 1995, the company expanded internationally with its first store in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In 2005, Sam Beiler, the company's then-president and chief executive officer, purchased Auntie Anne's, Inc. from Anne and Jonas. Sam steered the company through a major re-branding initiative designed to keep the established brand relevant for guests. He also took the company to new levels with his focus on innovation in all aspects of the business from new products to the corporate team's dedicated focus on franchise partner customer service.

Fourteen years after opening its first international location, Auntie Anne's hit a triple milestone with the first store opening in Mexico in 2009. The expansion also marked the 200th international store, bringing Auntie Anne's worldwide presence to 20 countries. Several months later, in June 2009, Auntie Anne's celebrated a "grand" grand opening. The 1,000th Auntie Anne's store location opened in Fresno, California.

In November 2010, Sam Beiler sold Auntie Anne's to FOCUS Brands, a restaurant franchisor based in Atlanta. As part of the FOCUS Brands family, Auntie Anne's continues to experience momentum and benefits from the new multifaceted synergies. Today, Auntie Anne's supports more than 300 franchise partners with more than 1,100 locations worldwide.

In addition to its franchising business, Auntie Anne's is also a distributor of gourmet fundraising products. Schools and other non-profit community groups can raise money for their organization by working with one of the more than 200 fundraising distributors throughout the country to sell a variety of baking kits and frozen pretzel products.

Auntie Anne's also has a presence in the retail arena with its At-Home Baking Kit. Available at specialty retailers, regional grocery stores, and a club store, the kit provides an opportunity for consumers to enjoy the fresh baked goodness of Auntie Anne's products in the comforts of their own kitchens. The easy-to-prepare kit comes with step-by-step instructions and a special Auntie Anne's versatile dough mix to make pretzel products, pizzas, gourmet breads, side dishes, and desserts.

## Twist -N- Shout: History of the Pretzel

**610 A.D.** Legend holds that an Italian monk, his name now lost to history, decided to reward his students by serving them baked scraps of leftover dough. He rolled and twisted the dough to resemble his students, who folded their arms across their chests when praying. After baking the dough to a golden brown, he called the finished product "pretiolas," Latin for "little rewards."

A good idea like this one didn't take long to catch on – "pretiolas" spread throughout Europe and were considered a symbol of good luck, long life, and prosperity.

**1510** A group of Turkish invaders sought to mount a sneak attack against the city of Vienna, Austria, by digging tunnels underneath the walls. But pretzel bakers heard the commotion, sounded the alarm, and grabbed their weapons to help fight off the attack. Their actions were rewarded with a seal that included a depiction of a pretzel.

**Mid-1500s** The classic pretzel's three-hole shape begins to take form. The holes represent the Christian trinity of "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," and pretzels are thought to bring spiritual wholeness.

The wedding phrase "tying the knot" got its start when a pretzel was used to tie the knot between two prominent families. The pretzel's loops stood for everlasting love.

**1600s** Hard pretzels were discovered by mistake, when a bakers' apprentice fell asleep by the furnace and let the treats bake "too long." At first, the baker was angry at this carelessness, but upon tasting the pretzels, quickly realized he had an opportunity for something big.

**1620** Pretzels may have made their way to the United States on the Mayflower. It is said that the Pilgrims traded pretzels with the Native Americans for various things.

**1800s** Immigrants from around Europe came to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and brought their pretzel recipes with them.

**1861** The first American hard pretzel factory was opened in Lititz, Pennsylvania. The artisans of the day rolled, baked, and salted pretzels by hand.

**1988** Anne Beiler bought a stand in a Downingtown, Pennsylvania farmer's market and Auntie Anne's was born.

**Today** Auntie Anne's bakers make 100 million pretzels per year (using enough dough in the process to wrap end-to-end around the earth three times).