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Best thing since sliced bread

Also found in: Dictionary, Thesaurus, Medical, Acronyms, Encyclopedia. A humorous and hyperbolic statement indicating one's belief that something is excellent, especially something new and innovative. These waterproof jeans are the best thing since sliced bread. I don't have to worry about getting soaked!See also: bread, since, slice, thingFarlex Dictionary of Idioms. © 2015 Farlex, Inc. all rights reserved. If someone thinks that something is the best thing since sliced bread, they think it is very good. When your programme first started I thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. Note: You can also say that something is the greatest thing since sliced bread. The new mill was the greatest thing since sliced bread and nobody was thinking about environmental issues. Note: These expressions are often used to show that you think that the person's opinion is wrong or foolish. See also: bread, since, slice, thingCollins COBUILD Idioms Dictionary, 3rd ed. © HarperCollins Publishers 2012 a notable new idea, person, or thing (used to express real or ironic appreciation). informal This phrase alludes to the mid 20th-century advertising promotions for packed, pre-sliced loaves.See also: bread, since, slice, thingFarlex Partner Idioms Dictionary © Farlex 2017 (informal, spoken) if you say that something is the best thing since sliced bread, you think it is extremely good, interesting, etc: My father doesn't like him very much, but my mother thinks he's the best thing since sliced bread!See also: bread, since, slice, thingFarlex Partner Idioms Dictionary © Farlex 2017The last best thing. An American inventor named Otto Rohwedder devised a machine that sliced a loaf of bread into individual slices. First sold in 1928, it was touted as "the greatest forward step in the baking industry since bread was wrapped," which led to popular phrase "the best thing since sliced bread." All of which raises the question, what did people say before "sliced bread"? "The best thing since indoor plumbing" was one phrase. And before that?—"since powdered wigs?" "Since moveable type?" "Since fire?"Endangered Phrases by Steven D. Price Copyright © 2011 by Steven D. PriceSee also: Want to thank TFD for its existence? Tell a friend about us, add a link to this page, or visit the webmaster's page for free fun content. Link to this page: the best thing since sliced bread "The magazine was basically just saying the county council was the best thing since sliced bread."So then it gets successful, and suddenly you're the best thing since sliced bread." Asked whether he gets a buzz from live TV, he says: "It's that sort of excitement you get when you're flying by the seat of your pants.It may not have been the best thing since sliced bread (though many critics seem to disagree with me on this) but in an age when we are starved of meaty and magnificent-looking dramas (and Red Riding always looked magnificent) it was a welcome slab of substance.Gadgets Breville toastie maker - the best thing since sliced bread? And Phonecards - no more rummaging for loose change.Or that Jamie Oliver, who never once set foot in a supermarket during several series of Jamie's Kitchen, now thinks they're the best thing since sliced bread.I wouldn't say Toast was the best thing since sliced bread (but if anyone can tell me what sliced bread knocked off the top spot, I'm here to be persuaded.IT'S the best thing since sliced bread - a free loaf for every reader. The phrase the best, or the greatest, etc., thing since sliced bread is an expression of enthusiastic appreciation, especially of a new invention or discovery. The earliest mention of ready-sliced bread put up on the market that I have found is from The Constitution-Tribune (Chillicothe, Missouri) of Friday 6th July 1928: Announcement by M. F. Bench of the Chillicothe Baking Company of a new sliced bread service is significant in that it gives the Chillicothe Baking Company the distinction of being the first bakers in the world to sell sliced bread to the public. Later improvements in the baking industry were often assessed by comparison with the introduction of sliced bread. For example, the following advertisement for Waiash Baking Company's Golden Toast Thick and Thin was published in The Evansville Press (Evansville, Indiana) of Friday 22nd December 1933: The Toast of the Whole Town... [...] Don't be fooled. There's only one Golden Toast. The careful blending of ingredients, the skill in baking, they haven't changed one iota. We've merely added the first improvement since sliced bread. . . thick and thin slices in the same loaf. Likewise, the following is from The Tampa Daily Times (Tampa, Florida) of Monday 12th November 1934: Dated bread, guaranteeing that it will reach the housewife in fresh condition, has been put on the market here by Bell Bakeries. The management announced that the company's new Bell Vitamin B white loaf with green and red wrapper will be plainly dated for freshness. "This is the most progressive step that has been taken in the baking industry since sliced bread was introduced," said N. R. Farrar, general manager of Bell bakeries. The following advertisement was published in the Lafayette Journal and Courier (Lafayette, Indiana) of Saturday 29th July 1939: HAVE YOU TRIED RUGER'S NEW Pantry-Package TWIN STYLE White Bread ? IT IS THE NEWEST THING Since SLICED BREAD ● On sale at your grocers. Therefore, the phrase the best, or the greatest, etc., thing since sliced bread is a kind of spoof marketing slogan. The earliest instance that I have found is from The Northern Whig (Belfast, Ireland) of Thursday 8th March 1951, which quoted the American journalist Dorothy Kilgallen (1913-65) writing in the New York Journal-American: Stewart Granger* "is the greatest thing since sliced bread." Stewart Granger is the latest "heart-throb" in the United States. Miss Dorothy Kilgallen, writing the New York "Journal-American," said this of Granger, who recently married Jean Simmons and is now working in Hollywood:—"Judging from the reactions of some of my normally sane female friends to a recent film called "King Solomon's Mines," I have come to the conclusion that the motion picture moguls don't realize what they have on their hands in the person of Stewart Granger. "[...] Miss Kilgallen quoted "one damsel" as saying: "He's so divine, every time he came on the screen I felt sick in my stomach." And another: "I've dreamt of him every night since I saw the picture six weeks ago." And a third (Miss Kilgallen's own sister): "He is the greatest thing since sliced bread!" * Stewart Granger (born James Lablache Stewart - 1913-93), English actor best thing since sliced breadMeaning:something that is too finean excellent person or thinga new invention that is likely to improve people's lives significantlysomething that is thought to be very goodExamples:The invention of internet has changed the way we live; it is the best thing since sliced bread.The way he was praising her - you would think that she was the best thing since sliced bread."Have you checked out this cool new app? I think its the best thing since sliced bread."Smartphones have become an indispensable part of our lives; they are the best thing since sliced bread.Some gadgets are marketed like the best thing since sliced bread, but I think they are just expensive gizmos."My new assistant is so efficient! She is the best thing since sliced bread!"I really love my new computer, its the best thing since sliced bread.Origin: The phrase refers to the convenience achieved by the invention of sliced bread, as what was earlier done by hand was now being done by machines. In this exact form, the phrase was first used in America in the 1950s. the best of both worlds)(have no truck with By Matt Blitz An idiom that is often used when something is new and fantastic is that "It's the best thing since sliced bread!" But how did this saying come to be? And what makes sliced bread so darn great? Our story begins about thirty thousand years ago, takes us through the town of Chillicothe, Missouri, and, then, to a futuristic "wonder'ful bread that is still on grocery store shelves today. Humans, and potentially Neanderthals, began grinding caitail, an edible plant that is still found in wetland habitats today, into flour approximately thirty thousand years ago. These humans realized that flour, chocked full of starch and carbohydrates, was a good source of energy and allowed them to be more mobile during their nomadic days. Additionally, cooking or baking the flour made the starch taste better. Researchers discovered this thanks to remains and traces of starch grains embedded in fossilized food preparation tools. The first man-made bread, likely, was unleavened, as in there was no yeast added. Today, we still eat certain types of unleavened bread, like naan, matzah, and flour tortillas. While humans didn't understand the mechanism behind it, at some point it was discovered that if bread was left out in the open, spores of yeast, a naturally forming microorganism that floats through the air, would infiltrate the grains and make it "raise." Leavened bread and the use of yeast in bread-making began sometime around four thousand years ago in ancient Egypt. In fact, archaeologists have found early grinding stones and baking chambers for yeast-based bread in Egyptian ruins, as well as drawings for thousands-of-year-old bakeries and breweries. From that point forward, bread and wheat became a staple in humankind's diet. The domestication of wheat allowed civilizations to transition from hunters, gatherers, and nomads to farmers, growers, and urban dwellers. Bread was cooked in every household and was eaten at most meals. It came in all shapes, sizes, and consistency. For about five thousand years, bread-making was all done by hand, a necessary, but laborious practice. That is, until the industrial age. In 1859, Louis Pasteur discovered how yeast worked, and with that, the mass production of yeast began. Charles Fleischman began selling yeast cells in test tubes to bakers in 1863. By 1868, Fleischman was wrapping yeast in tin foil. At the turn of the century, advertisements began popping up in newspapers and journals for yeast "of the purest quality." Stone flour mills appeared first in Europe at the turn of the 19th century and, then, in America in the 1820s and 1830s. The Erie Canal in the American northeast aided the transportation of this mass-produced flour. In fact, Rochester, New York earned the nickname "Flour City" because, within days of the canal opening, twenty flour mills began operations in Rochester, sending their product all over the east coast. Bread was no longer a homemade item, but produced for the masses as quickly, cheaply, uniform, and efficiently as possible. The first bread slicing machines, using parallel steel blades, appeared in America in the 1860s. However, pre-sliced bread sold to the masses didn't come about until 1928 when a man named Otto Frederick Rohwedder of Davenport, Iowa invented a device to automate this process. He first built a prototype of his bread slicer in 1912, which didn't interest bakers he showed it to as it was thought that no one would want their bread pre-sliced. Unfortunately, Rohwedder's blueprints and machine were destroyed in a fire in 1917. From there, he struggled to obtain funding to begin again on his machine owing to the lack of interest. The primary concern was the reduction in the shelf life of the bread. Rohwedder got around part of the staleness problem by wrapping the thinly sliced loaves in wax paper directly after slicing was complete. Finally, in 1927, Rohwedder was able to rebuild the machine and produce a model ready to use in an actual bakery. He sold his bread slicing and wrapping machine to the Chillicothe Baking Company, in Chillicothe, Missouri, about ninety miles northeast of Kansas City. The front page of the town's newspaper announced the arrival of this new standard of living with the headline, "Sliced Bread is Made Here." A back page ad on July 6, 1928 claimed it was the "greatest forward step in the baking industry since bread was wrapped." Customers loved the convenience, reliability, and consistency of sliced bread. More and more bakeries wanted their own machines, including the Taggart Baking Company in Indianapolis. Alexander Taggart was a third-generation baker. Alexander's father, after learning everything he knew about baking from his father while living on the Isle of Man (a small island in the Irish Sea between Ireland and Great Britain), immigrated to the US shortly after the Civil War. He opened his first bakery in Indianapolis in 1869, eventually joining forces with another baker, Burton Parrott, with whom they opened Parrott-Taggart Baking Company together. By 1898, they had sold and help found the United States Baking Company, which merged into the National Biscuit Company, aka Nabisco (changed their name to this in 1901). Taggart and Parrott continued to operate under their own banner, but nationally as part of Nabisco. But in 1904, Taggart sold his share of the company. According to Cluster Mag's article "A Visual History of Wonder Bread," Taggart became the largest bread bakery in the state making 300,000 loaves per week. They expanded their operations and factory. In the centuries-old bread making process, machines were now replacing human hands. Taggart embraced this and began touting that their bread was the future, unlike "anything that could be baked at home." On May 19, 1921 in the newspaper Indianapolis Star, a small advertisement appeared (directly above Dr. William Osborne and his "Self-Adjusting Rupture Appliance") that said simply "WONDER? How often do you use this word every day? Check yourself." Two days later, another ad appeared that told readers that they'll "never find WONDER of a better kind." Finally, on May 24th, a full page revealed what all this "wondering" was about: Taggart's Wonder Bread - "a truly wonderful bread" - was here. As put by Clutter Magazine, "this new, virgin white, 1.5 pound loaf perfectly evoked the otherworldliness of the enormous manufacturing system that was seen as America's future." Within only a few years, Wonder Bread was America's favorite bread. In 1930, Wonder Bread became the first mass-produced bread to be pre-sliced. This brings us back to "The best thing since sliced bread." It is thought by most etymologists that it loosely stems from the aforementioned July 6, 1928 back page ad in Chillicothe's newspaper ("The greatest forward step in the baking industry since bread was wrapped.") and, later, Wonder Bread's own constant hyping along a similar vein of its pre-sliced bread. As for the first documented reference to the exact phrase, this is thought to be in a 1952 interview where the famous comedian Red Skelton "advised" the Salisbury (Maryland) Times to "not worry about television. It's the greatest thing since sliced bread." The invention of sliced bread was yet another case where things humans used to do by hand were now being done by machines, making it significantly more convenient than ever before to make things like sandwiches (which gave rise to such things as the peanut butter and jelly sandwich- see: The Surprisingly Short History of the Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich). So what was the best thing before sliced bread? If you believe Chillicothe's, it was wrapped bread, but that seems only a minor advancement. After all, whole loaves typically keep pretty well without being wrapped. Given how drastically bread helped change the way humans lived many thousands of years ago setting up so much of history, civilization, and the accumulation of knowledge since, it could possibly be said that machine-made, pre-sliced bread was the greatest thing since, well, bread. Bonus Facts: The sour taste of sourdough bread comes from lactobacillus, which lives in symbiosis with yeast, feeding on byproducts of the yeast fermentation. The sour taste itself comes from the lactic acid produced by the lactobacillus. This also helps the bread last longer without spoiling as most microbes can't handle the acidic environment created by the lactobacillus. If you ever wondered where "Polly wants a cracker" came from, Nabisco had a more direct influence on that one. They originally released the saltine cracker in 1876. Their slogan for this new type of cracker was "Polly wants a cracker?" Saltine crackers were mildly successful after being released, but received a huge boost in popularity thanks to the Great Depression. Saltines were a nice cheap, tasty item to add to other foods such as watery soup, to make the meal more filling. In order to soothe consumer concerns about the safety and sanitation of machine and factory made baked goods, the Taggart plant had everything painted bright, snow white, to give a "clean look." Of course, painting something white has nothing to do with being clean, and no doubt they used lead-based paint in the food making factory... In 1943, right in the middle of World War II, the government banned sliced bread. It was a deemed an unnecessary use of materials and resources with a war effort going on. This does not sit well with the general public, nor baking companies. One woman wrote in the New York Times proclaimed "how important sliced bread is to the morale and saneness of a household." While bread has been used since the 17th century to clean the frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, restorationists have found that Wonder Bread, and it's spongy texture, it a remarkably efficient tool cleaning the Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam." This article was originally published in Today I Found Out. Featured Image Source: wuestenigel on VisualHunt / CC BY Stay updated with all the insights.Navigate news, 1 email day. Subscribe to Qrius

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