

TRAVEL

Spam, Spam, Spam and more Spam

Joke if you want, but Spam has its own museum

BY CRAIG GUSTAFSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

AUSTIN, Minn. — Depending on who's eating it, Spam is either a slice of post-war Americana or a slice of who knows what.

Whatever it is, the canned convenience food now has its own museum.

"All (you've) got to say is Spam and you've got a discussion," said Nancy Barker of Menasha, Wis., emerging from the Spam Museum Friday with a handful of memorabilia. "Of course, there's also quite a lot of jokes."

For 66 years this southern Minnesota town of 22,000 has been known affectionately, or derisively, as Spamtown.

"It's a part of our past and it's probably part of our future," said Barker, 66, who has her own recipe for Spam pancakes. "People are almost cult followers."

The museum has been open since September, but Spam maker Hormel Foods delayed a celebration until Saturday because of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The rescheduled grand opening is steeped in Americana, with famous TV moms like Marion Ross and Barbara Billingsley, sports figures and a World War II memorial dedication.

Spam fun

Inside the museum — admission is free — those followers will have plenty to absorb. A 430-foot conveyor belt rattles around the ceiling, carrying

The museum also has exhibits on the Hormel family, explains what goes into Spam (pork shoulder, ham, spices and preservatives) and describes the product's special relationship with American troops in World War II.

about 850 cans of Spam.

Visitors can take a Spam exam or can their own Spam (not the real stuff).

There's also a radio station — KSpam — and a video screen that shows classic Monty Python skits slamming Spam.

The museum also has exhibits on the Hormel family, explains what goes into Spam (pork shoulder, ham, spices and preservatives) and describes the product's special relationship with American troops in World War II.

The war generated huge sales for Hormel, which provided 16 million cans of Spam each week to the military. From 1939 to 1942, the company's overall sales doubled to almost \$120 million. On Sunday, Broken, the NBC News anchor, will dedicate a special memorial to honor World War II veterans.

Gordon Handrich, a World War II veteran from Appleton, Wis., who was at the museum on Friday, remembered eating Spam. He liked it, but he

remembered some soldiers who swore they'd never eat it again once the war ended.

Six billion cans

A Spam-o-meter at the museum tallies the cans of Spam produced. Hormel expects to turn out its 6 billionth sometime between June 29 and July 3.

The museum, which is free, has drawn 39,000 visitors since it opened, and the number is expected to double this weekend.

Laura Shields saw a freeway sign for the Spam museum and said she had to stop and drag her vacationing family in for a look. "It's incredibly cool," she said.

Shields said she's carried on a running gag with her brother-in-law, who gave her a Spam calendar for Christmas. The museum shop sold windsocks, pens, T-shirts in Spam's distinctive navy and yellow colors and, of course, the cans.

Some people may love Spam for its salty ham taste, but others are fascinated by the name. In 1935, Hormel President Jay Hormel held a contest at a New Year's Eve party to name the meat. The winner spliced the words "spice" and "ham" to claim the \$100 prize.

Barker, who said she has eaten Spam all her life and fed it to her six children, left the gift shop with a stuffed can of talking Spam. She gave it a squeeze. It chimed: "I love Spam."

FLAGSTAR BANK Freedom of Choice

Classic Checking

Convenient with tiered interest rates.

Homebuyers Checking

Convenient free checking account for homeowners.

Smart Checking

Convenience that gives you more than you'd expect (i.e. travel services, discounts & much more).

Star Checking

Convenient Online banking. Open and maintain your checking account exclusively Online.

Flagstar 55 Checking

Convenient free checking exclusively for customers over age 55.

Introducing... the NEW Flagstar Premier Business Checking Account!



Convenience You Can Count On.

Ann Arbor
734-663-9699
734-994-7800
734-214-2265
734-528-2685

Belleville
734-699-6639

Bloomfield Hills
248-988-8613

Canton
734-981-4942

Chesterfield
586-421-0388

Detroit
313-832-7971

Farmington Hills
248-324-0013

Fenton
810-714-2734

Howell
517-552-9655

Livonia
734-953-6890

Madison Heights
248-588-6777
248-543-1817

Pontiac
248-475-0696

Rochester
248-652-9792

Roseville
586-778-8043

Sterling Heights
586-803-1180
586-268-3230

Taylor
313-299-0186

Troy
248-312-5400
248-288-5559
248-435-0059

Waterford
248-674-1380

www.flagstar.com

FREE Car Flag when you open a new Flagstar checking account!



FLAGSTAR CHECKING ACCOUNTS: A minimum deposit is required to open a new checking account. Restrictions apply. Open a new checking account and receive a free car flag while supplies last. MEMBER FDIC

Observer Classifieds sell! (800) 579-SELL

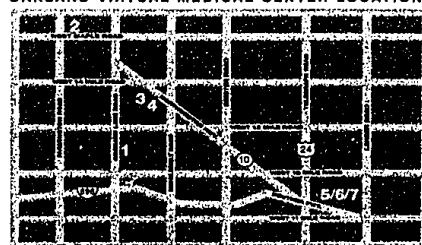
Introducing Oakland Virtual Medical Center, Oakland County's premier outpatient resource dedicated to serving the needs of patients and doctors.

At the Oakland Virtual Medical Center, eight state-of-the-art outpatient facilities have been redesigned to provide a forward-thinking, interconnected resource for state-of-the-art outpatient care serving all of Oakland County. Here you'll find a friendly staff of professionals ready to care for the individual needs of patients and doctors.

Doctors will appreciate our Virtual Scheduler™ technology and prompt on-line test results. Using our advanced software, they can schedule treatment or review a patient's test results on-line. Beautifully refined surroundings make visits more relaxing for everyone and afford ample privacy for consultation. No request is too great. No service is too small. We even serve a great cup of Starbucks coffee!

The future of outpatient care has arrived in Oakland County. Visit our website at www.oaklandvirtual.org and discover the difference it could make in your life. Or call (866) 887-OVMC (6862) for complete information.

OAKLAND VIRTUAL MEDICAL CENTER LOCATIONS



- 1 BERRY SURGERY CENTER (248) 851-8767
- 2 MAISEL WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER (248) 539-4040
- 3 ROSE IMAGING CENTER (248) 932-3200
- 4 KARMANOS CANCER INSTITUTE'S WEISSBERG CANCER TREATMENT CENTER (248) 538-8509
- 5 LANSEB SURGERY CENTER (248) 357-0880
- 6 CENTER FOR CLEAR VISION & VISION REHABILITATION INSTITUTE (248) 357-4389
- 7 LASER SURGERY INSTITUTE (248) 358-3128
- 8 CLEAR VISION CENTER (248) 648-9007
- 9 OVMC LABORATORY SERVICES (800) 456-2154

(Not shown on map)



Oakland Virtual Medical Center
Eight trusted names. One dedicated system.