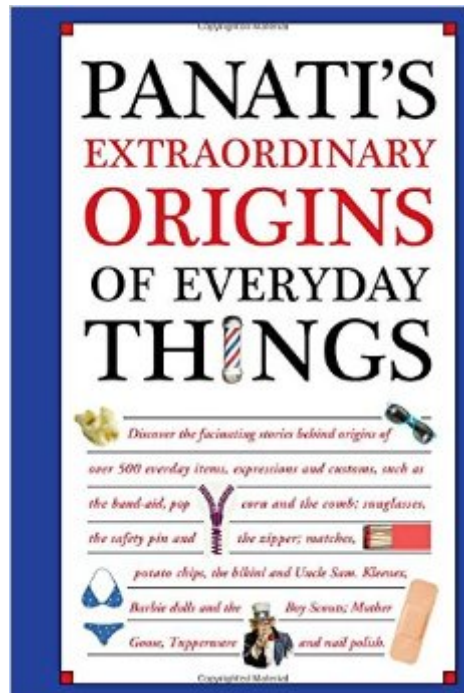


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# Panati's Extraordinary Origins Of Everyday Things



## Synopsis

For lovers of facts, students of popular culture, history buffs, and science enthusiasts, the foremost specialist on everything tells how and why hundreds of the everyday items, expressions, and customs we take for granted came into existence. Learn the fascinating discovery stories behind over 500 phenomena, including: How chewing gum and Silly Putty began as substitutes for rubber. How the potato chip emerged from an act of pique on the part of an Indian named Crum. How a socialite invented the dishwasher because servants too frequently broke her expensive china. Why April Fool's Day started out as New Year's Eve, a joke in itself. How the song 'Happy Birthday to You' began as a kindergarten jingle titled 'Good Morning to All.' How the zipper was one man's attempt to make obsolete not buttons... but shoelaces. How the newlywed husband came to the aid of his accident-prone bride with the invention of the Band-Aid. How the hot dog began as an outlawed Roman sausage and received its name at a New York baseball game. How a pot-and-pan salesman who baited customers with soapy steel wool pads launched the S.O.S empire. How Drs. Fallopius and Condom made strides in inventing and popularizing a male means of birth control. How the original Goldilocks was a disgruntled, gray-haired crone, tortured by the three bears. How Ketchup became from the Romans, Tabasco sauce from an exiled New Orleans banker, Mayonnaise from a French duke, and A.I. Steak Sauce from a royal chef named Brand.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you enjoy trivia and unusual facts, then Charles Panati's Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things, is the perfect book. I have read other trivia books and I can say without hesitation that Mr.

Panati produces the best of the genre. Many trivia books list a dry and uninspired fact sheet. Panati, however, avoids this common pitfall and instead entertains us with unusual and well researched trivia about the history or origin of many everyday items and customs. His books are formatted into logical chapter groupings that easily flow from one topic to another. The book is a pleasure to read and it teaches you in a pain free style, answering questions that until now you couldn't find answers for! Panati's words will both enlighten and enchant you.

This review needn't be long, for the title tells it all. Whether you want to know the origin of blue jeans, dental floss or a comb, you'll find it here. Because for some reason or another, I am on an unfulfillable quest to always know more and more, this is the type of book I love, and one I'd recommend more than any of the others I've read. The book is broken up very nicely into sections so the thoughts are coherent and the content flows. This is actually a book you can read before bed or on the train - rather than others written in similar style, but that are better for reference. Enjoy.

I didn't learn this much history in school. It is amazing to learn that customs we practice today have their roots hundreds, even thousands of years ago. Ages high school to 100 will enjoy this book.

I found this to be one of the most fascinating and interesting books I have ever read. Flip the book open to any page and learn the history of everyday things we take for granted. How were Band-Aids invented? When toilet paper was first invented, why did so few people buy it? Who invented the razor blade, or ready-mixed paint? When were toilets invented? How were false teeth made during the civil war? What commonly available fluid did people use to brush their teeth? Ever wonder where the expression "give the cold shoulder" came from? The custom of shaking hands? All of these mysteries and hundreds more are masterfully revealed by Panati. I love to read a few passages before bed -- that's the beauty of this book. You can pick it up and put it down over and over again. Well written, thoroughly researched, and told with wit and economy, this book is a great read for anyone with a curiosity about life, culture and civilization.

A superb traveling or gift book, with excellent informative pieces of information which will please almost anyone. His other books are equally well written, but this is probably the best due to its diversity of information. This time, I'm getting three copies, since when it is lent out it rarely comes home!

This was a gift to me from my parents well over ten years ago and is a book I still read occasionally. Believe it or not, it represents the single most important positive influence in my education. I realize that most first time readers will not be impressionable elementary-school children like I was, but I can't imagine anyone who wouldn't be able to find this book an enjoyable read.

I heard Panati speaking on the TV show "Modern Marvels" last night, and he repeated as fact the old myth that the palace at Versailles did not have so much as a single working toilet, and that guests would have to relieve themselves in the stairwells, which caused quite a stench and was the reason why the French people of the era used so much perfume. This absurd myth is easily disproven by a simple visit to Versailles, where the tour guides will readily show you the toilets of the era (while wondering aloud why so many American tourists have been misinformed). The idea that the sophisticated French elite of the day would relieve themselves in stairwells is also rather absurd on its face. I was amazed to see Panati repeat that hackneyed myth with such earnestness. I would have a hard time believing anything written in a book by someone who seems to state myths as facts. Another reviewer (who actually read the book), noted other factual distortions. Come on, Panati!! This stuff isn't so hard to get accurate!

Actually this book tears down many myths (including the idea that a man named Crapper invented the toilet). As for Versailles, the fact of the matter is (as any historian can tell you) it was largely open to the public and they did, indeed, pee wherever they liked. Perfume was popular not just among the French, but of all people who could afford it, because bathing was frowned upon.

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