

## **the world of competitive eating. why.**

We all know about competitive eating; dudes and chicks that just stuff their faces as fast as they can for sport. You heard that right. SPORT. COMPETITIVE EATING IS A FUCKING SPORT. It is overseen by a group called The International Federation of Competitive Eating, Inc. and/or Major League Eating.

**The International Federation of Competitive Eating, Inc. (IFOCE)** is an organization that supervises and regulates eating contests across the globe, acting as a central resource for the sport. Top events include the Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest, La Costena "Feel the Heat" Jalapeño Eating Challenge, the Krystal Square Off World Hamburger Eating Championship and the National Buffalo Wing Festival. The IFOCE was founded in 1997 by brothers George and Richard Shea.

The organization also produces television shows on competitive eating. In 2002, IFOCE produced Glutton Bowl, a two-hour eating event on the Fox Network. In 2007 the IFOCE produced four one-hour programs for Spike TV under the title Chowdown. In 2006, the IFOCE produced three hours of programming on ESPN, including a one-hour live show on the 2005 Nathan's Famous hot dog eating contest and one-hour shows on the Johnsonville Foods Bratwurst contest and the Krystal Hamburger contest. The Alka-Seltzer U.S. Open of Competitive eating, a three-hour elimination tournament, was a 2005 IFOCE production. In addition, the IFOCE produced four 30-minute shows under the title of Tour de Gorge and six 30-minute shows titled Eats of Strength for INHD. It's now called Major League Eating. Which seems like a damn joke.

**“Major League Eating** is the world body that oversees all professional eating contests. The organization, which developed competitive eating and includes the sport's governing body, the International Federation of Competitive Eating, helps sponsors to develop, publicize and execute world-class eating events in all varieties of food disciplines. (also a proud sponsor of Feeding America so good for them). MLE-sanctioned eating contests provide dramatic audience entertainment and offer an unparalleled platform for media exposure.”

## **Some History about Competitive Eating**

The first recorded pie eating contest took place in Toronto in 1878. It was organised as a charity fundraising event and won by Albert Piddington. It is not known how many pies were consumed. The prize was a “Handsomely Bound Book”. The event was covered in newspapers all over the United States, giddy with descriptions of this unorthodox form of “the latest new entertainment.” The Indianapolis Journal took time to explain the event in detail to its readers, who were uninitiated to the specifics of pie-eating tournaments:

“A certain number of very luscious and very sticky tarts, say of raspberry or other fruit, are placed on low stools, and the game consists in eating them without the aid of the hands, a prize being offered to the person who eats the most in a given time. The contestants hands being tied behind them, and they make the assault on their bended knees. The spectacle of a row of dignified gentlemen or beautiful ladies with faces besmeared with jelly and bolting tarts, with their hands tied behind them, would be one to instruct and amuse.”

Pies were cheap and popular, readily available foods for nineteenth-century Americans and Canadians alike. Although Canadians were the apparent originators of competitive eating, after the newspaper coverage circulated in America, pie-eating competitions caught on across the country. Some were head-to-head challenges, run like a boxing match, while others were group competitions.

Unlike the Canadian competitions, in which women participated, the American pie tournaments took place at men’s clubs and male-only bars. For the male participants, pie-eating was a reflection of their masculinity.

There are some notable examples of early eating contestants, such as Joe “Spider” McCarthy, who consumed 31 pies in a competition held at Charles Tanby’s Saloon in 1897. Afterward the champion devised a Broadway show based on pie-eating, capitalizing on a 1890s trend for famous athletes to appear in vaudeville shows. The gist of Spider’s show was that the main character would win the hand of a baker’s daughter by beating his romantic rival in a pie-eating contest. It was to include “a genuine pie-eating scene with real pies, the first time it has been done on any stage,” Spider told a New

York World reporter. He pledged to strip bare to the waist and devour seven pies. "I can finish a ten-cent pie in three bites," he bragged. "What the public wants is realism. Pie-eating is much more of an American national sport than boxing any day of the week."

Frank Dotzler is also noteworthy after consuming "275 oysters, 8 & 1/8th pounds of steak, 12 rolls, and 3 large pies, all washed down with 11 cups of coffee" at an event organised by the Manhattan Fat Men's Club in 1909. Such extravagant consumption was connected to wealth; it was expensive to be fat at the turn of the century. Food costs were high enough that most middle-class Americans couldn't afford the foods consumed by most Fat Men's Club members, who weighed two hundred pounds on average. But as cheap food became more readily available by the 1920s, and as ideas about body image changed, the Fat Men's Clubs died out.

By the 1940s pie-eating contests were featured at community events across the country, such as Boy Scout jamborees, Rotary Club meetings, fraternity parties, and Army versus Navy competitions. Some of these events included a pie-baking competition for the women, but the messy task of devouring the pies was usually left to the men. Competitive pie-eating became rebranded as feminine family fun when it left the dark saloons and men's clubs and came into the light of local festivals.

The recent surge in the popularity of competitive eating is due in large part to the development of the Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest, an annual holiday tradition that has been held on July 4 every year since 1916 at Coney Island. While the origins are debated, it is believed to have begun as a result of four immigrants who tried to eat as many hot dogs as possible to show off their patriotism.

Now lets talk about **JOEY FUCKING CHESTNUT.**

IN HIS OWN WORDS, ON HIS OWN WEBSITE:

"Joey Chestnut is the world's greatest eater. This is not an opinion but a statement of fact. He holds more competitive eating records than any other athlete in history, by a wide margin. However, despite his total domination, Joey didn't find competitive eating... it found him."

Born on November 25th, 1983 in Vallejo, California he earned a degree in engineering and construction management from San Jose State University. He initially developed his talent for devouring large amounts of food when traveling home to visit family during college. Joey was living the typical college life; money was tight. Therefore, an extra helping of food was always appreciated. And besides, nobody cooks like mom. His brother was the first to recognize Joey's potential. He signed Joey up for his very first contest with low resistance. In Joey's words, "A free hotel stay at a casino and all the lobster I can eat? Sure, I'll give it a shot."

Even in his first contest, the 21-year-old began to transform on stage from quiet and reserved into the legendary eater we know today. Although he saw competitive eating as a strange concept: eat as fast as you can on stage with people screaming at you, he and his family accepted the bizarre sport and never looked back.

So here's all the shit he's eaten fast and gotten a world record for:

## **2006**

47 grilled cheese sandwiches / 10 Minutes

118 Jalapeno Poppers / 10 minutes

9 Pounds, 6 Ounces Smoked, Pulled Pork / 10 Minutes

## **2007**

56 Sausage and Cheese Kolaches / 8 Minutes

45 pulled pork sandwiches / 10 minutes

## **2009**

5.9 lbs of funnel cake / 10 minutes

## **2011**

23 6" Philly cheesesteak sandwiches / 10 minutes

13 lbs Salt Potatoes / Wild Carp Week / 10 minutes

7.5 Pizza Hut P'Zones / 10 minutes

53 soft beef tacos/Taco Bell / 10 minutes /

## **2012**

7.61 lbs Buffalo Chicken Wings / 12 minutes

20 8-oz corned beef sandwiches / 10 minutes

390 shrimp wontons/ 8 Minutes

102 Tamales / 12 Minutes

## **2013**

4.375 Three-Pound Apple Pies / 8 Minutes

54 Brain Tacos / 8 Minutes

141 Hard Boiled Eggs / 8 Minutes

25 7oz half Katz's Delicatessen Pastrami Sandwiches / 10 minutes

13.76 pounds pork rib meat / 12 minutes

121 Twinkies / 6 Minutes

## **2014**

12 lbs 8.75 oz Deep Fried Asparagus Spears/ 10 minutes

30 6oz. Joeys Seafood Restaurants Fish Tacos / 5 Minutes

384 Day-Lee Foods gyoza / 10 minutes

165 Pierogi / 8 minutes

62 pulled pork sliders / 10 Minutes

9.35 lbs whole turkey / 10 minutes

## **2015**

15 16oz bowls (1.875 gallons) / 8 Minutes

## **2016**

14.5lb of pie / 8 minutes

14.5 lbs of illegal pete's burritos / 10 Minutes

30 8-oz Gyros/ 10 Minutes

103 Krystal Burgers / 8 minutes

23 6oz Meat Pies / 10 minutes

43 4oz Pork Roll Sandwiches / 10 Minutes

25.5 lb of Poutine / 10 minutes

15lb St. Elmo Shrimp Cocktail / 8 minutes

## **2017**

55 Glazed Donuts / 8 Minutes

25.25 Baked Bear Ice-Cream Sandwiches / 6 Minutes

55 4oz Sandwiches / 10 minutes

126 Traditional Tacos / 8 minutes

52 Cheeseburgs / 10 minutes

## **2018**

74 Nathan's Famous Hot Dogs And Buns / 10 minute

On the 4th of July in the year of our lord 2021, Joey beat his previous record and ate 76 HOT DOGS AND BUNS IN 10 MINUTES.

## **HE HAS MERCH**

His store includes four different types of wing sauces, "classic boardwalk coney sauce", and spicy brown "firecracker" mustard, all coming in at around \$8 a bottle. (they are on sale right now for \$5-6).

## **HOW??????**

Apparently there hasn't been a lot of research on competitive eaters, but some gastroenterologists have provided some insight into how they do it. According to an article in Gastroenterology and Endoscopy News, "After being swallowed (competitors have dozens of swallowing techniques, such as "chipmunking," in which they puff their cheeks out as they stuff their mouths full of food or gulp big bites followed by sips of water), the food mass moves through the esophagus, a portion of the route that takes about 10 seconds to traverse for the first mouthfuls and longer for every swallow afterward as the esophageal pipeline fills up."

Competitive eaters have to learn how to relax their esophagus so that it expands, allowing more food to go down. From there, the hot dog travels to the lower esophageal sphincter (LES), an involuntary bundle of muscles at the low end of the esophagus that prevents acid from getting into the stomach. Competitive eaters have developed various techniques for relaxing these muscles.

A normal eater has a stomach that feels full after consuming about a liter or a liter and a half's worth of food. Competitive eaters learn to stretch and relax their stomachs to fit in more food by eating large amounts of low-calories foods and liquids including water, diet soda, watermelon and cabbage. The stretching does not go on indefinitely. Everyone has to stop at some point.

## **WHY??????**

Couldn't find any research on why people competitively eat. Seriously there's like none out there. Someone get on it asap. I'm curious.