23 Crazy Facts You Should Know About Chick-fil-A

By 2020, the fast-food chain is expected to be larger than Wendy’s, Burger King and Taco Bell.

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Fast-food chain Chick-fil-A’s history dates back to the 1940s, when its founder S. Truett Cathy opened the Dwarf House. Two decades after introducing one of the country’s first chicken sandwiches there, he used that recipe to open the first-ever Chick-fil-A in Atlanta in 1967.

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It wasn’t long before that Chick-fil-A skyrocketed in popularity. Today, the company generates more revenue per restaurant than any other fast-food chain. It’s almost made its way into all 50 states, with only Hawaii, Alaska and Vermont without a location. It’s also been reported that the company will likely become the third-largest fast-food chain within the next two years, surpassing Wendy’s, Burger King and Taco Bell.

It’s a growing phenomenon and there’s much to learn from the chicken chain and all its success. For more, here are 23 crazy facts about Chick-fil-A.

1. Before Chick-fil-A, there was the Dwarf House.

Chick-fil-A didn’t get its catchy name right off the bat. Before Chick-fil-A, there was the Dwarf House, which founder S. Truett Cathy opened in 1946 in Hapeville, Ga. Ironically, the Dwarf House’s menu focused on hamburgers and steaks. There are still 12 Dwarf House restaurants across the U.S.

2. It was officially founded in 1967.

After much success with the Dwarf House, Cathy opened the first-ever Chick-fil-A in 1967 in Atlanta.

3. Chick-fil-A’s founder popularized the chicken sandwich.

After the hamburger came the chicken sandwich, and Cathy might be to credit for its widespread popularity. In 1964, while at The Dwarf House, Cathy was approached by a local poultry supplier who’d produced too many chicken breasts. Taking the extra supply, Cathy came up with a fast-food cooking method to offer his lunch patrons a new option: *the chicken sandwich*.

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4. The “A” in “Chick-fil-A” has a meaning.

The “A” at the end of “Chick-fil-A” isn’t just a play on the word “fillet.” It also means *Grade A.*

5. All Chick-fil-A restaurants are closed on Sundays.

According to the Chick-fil-A website, after Cathy's experience working in restaurants that were open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, he understood the importance of time off. That's why you'll never see a Chick-fil-A restaurant open on Sundays. As the website explains, Cathy set aside one day of the week for himself and his employees "to rest and worship if they choose."

6. The first 100 customers at a new Chick-fil-A restaurant get free Chick-fil-A for a year.

Dubbed the "First 100 Campout," Chick-fil-A encourages fans to camp out in front of its new locations the day before they open and promises to reward the first 100 customers free Chick-fil-A for a year.

7. Only three states don't have a Chick-fil-A restaurant.

Chick-fil-A has made its way into nearly every U.S. state. There are locations in 47 states, plus Washington D.C. The only states it has yet to set up in are Alaska, Hawaii and Vermont.

8. It has one Hawaiian-themed restaurant.

For a tropical twist, one of Chick-fil-A's largest restaurants is Hawaiian-inspired, called Truett's Luau and located in

Fayetteville, Ga. The 8,000-square-foot dine-in restaurant offers an array of seafood, pork and chicken options.

9. Opening a Chick-fil-A franchise is cheap.

If you're interested in becoming a fast-food franchisee, but worried about what it might cost you, check out Chick-fil-A. There are little financial prerequisites needed to apply for a Chick-fil-A franchise, and opening a restaurant only costs $10,000. Not only that, but Chick-fil-A pays for all startup costs including real estate, construction and restaurant equipment.

10. It's extremely competitive to become a Chick-fil-A franchisee.

While opening a Chick-fil-A franchise might be cheap, the competition is high. The chain gets more than 20,000 franchisee applications a year and chooses only 75 to 80, according to *Business Insider*. That means you have less than a 1 percent chance of becoming a Chick-fil-A franchisee.

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11. It's the largest buyer of Sunkist lemons in the world.

In 2014 alone, Chick-fil-A served 121 million cups of lemonade, using 250 million lemons, making it the largest purchaser of Sunkist lemons in the entire world. According to an earlier press release, in 2014, "[it] purchased more lemons from Sunkist than the entire country of Japan."

12. It’s the largest buyer of peanut oil in the country.

It’s not only breaking records when it comes to lemons, but peanut oil too. The ingredient behind Chick-fil-A’s crispy chicken taste turns out to be peanut oil, and it’s the largest domestic buyer of it. Chick-fil-A’s culinary senior manager once explained in a press release: “I don’t know what you’d call it – serendipitous or magical – but the peanut oil makes our chicken sandwich nearly impossible to replicate.”

13. Chick-fil-A employees are extremely polite.

“Please” and “thank you” are common words you’ll hear around Chick-fil-A restaurants. According to a 2016 annual drive-thru report by QSR Magazine, Chick-fil-A was voted the most polite chain restaurant. Compared to 15 other fast-food chains in the survey, employees at the chicken chain were voted the most likely to say “please” and thank you” to customers.

14. Its grilled nuggets took seven years and $50 million to create.

To get the recipe just right, it took Chick-fil-A lots of time and money to craft its Grilled Nuggets. In fact, it took a whopping seven years and $50 million. Much of that was spent by Chick-fil-A scientists creating a special grill just for the nuggets.

15. Its waffle fries are the most-

ordered menu item.

While you might expect the chicken sandwich to be the most popular, it turns out the most-ordered menu item doesn’t even have chicken in it. According to a Chick-fil-A press release, waffle fries are its most popular menu item.

16. The company will never go public.

Before Cathy passed away in 2014, he made his children sign a contract agreeing that Chick-fil-A will always remain a private company. However, he did agree that they could sell it if they wished.

17. Chick-fil-A’s chicken sandwich recipe is locked up.

To make sure no one ever gets a hold of Chick-fil-A’s secret chicken sandwich recipe, the company has locked it up in a vault at its headquarters in Atlanta.

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18. Chick-fil-A sauce is just a medley of other sauces.

Chick-fil-A’s famous sauce is no secret. In fact, in a tweet, the company revealed its simple formula: a blend of honey mustard, barbecue and ranch.

19. The restaurants make their

pickles on-site.

Every Chick-fil-A restaurant is responsible for making its own pickles, a process that takes three days and involves cutting up cucumbers and soaking them in brine for three days.

20. Chick-fil-A helps its employees go to college.

Cathy was always a big believer in higher education. Since 1973, Chick-fil-A has given more than $35 million in college scholarships to Chick-fil-A employees.

21. It has a secret menu.

Like a number of other fast-food chains, Chick-fil-A offers its own secret menu. Some of the tasty items on this hidden list include a double decker sandwich, cheese fries, a chicken quesadilla, lettuce-wrapped sandwiches and a rootbeer float.

22. It makes more money per restaurant than any other fast-food chain.

Chick-fil-A’s popularity is sky-high. According to data from QSR Magazine, in 2016 alone its average sales per restaurant was $4.4 million, compared to its competitor KFC, whose average was $1.1 million.

23. It’s expected to become the third-largest fast-food chain.

By 2020, Chick-fil-A is expected to become the third-largest fast-food chain, surpassing Wendy’s, Taco Bell and Burger

King, according to a recent report by *Buzzfeed*.

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