Cotton Candy Encyclopedia Article

Cotton Candy

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Cotton Candy

Cotton candy is a fluffy, cottony confection made from long, thin strands of spun sugar. It was invented in 1900 by Thomas Patton, who called it Fairy Floss. By 1905, the confection was made by several companies, one of which had adopted the name Kotton Kandy. Some of the machines used at this time appear to have been electric; others were hand-driven. Today cotton candy is still a popular treat at circuses, county fairs, and amusement parks. It is known as *barbe de grandpere* ("grandfather's beard") in France and *zuckerwolle* ("sugar wool"> in Germany.

A cotton candy machine is composed of a spinning drum inside a larger bowl. Sucrose, better known as ordinary table sugar, is placed in the inner drum, where it is heated until it melts into syrup. This syrup starts streaming up the inside walls of the spinning drum and coming out the top in fine strands. These strands of molten sugar cool and solidify very quickly in the air. They begin to build up into cottony fluff inside the outer bowl. As a paper cone is rolled around inside the bowl, it picks up the fluff for easier eating. Cotton candy is often tinted with food coloring, most commonly pink. Sometimes flavorings are added as well.

In 1988, pediatrician Richard Fuisz founded Fuisz Technologies, a company built on an unusual use for cotton candy technology. Fuisz put powdered medicine along with sugar or similar ingredients in a cotton candy-type machine to create a rapidly dissolving tablet.