A Taste of the 20th Century

1900’s
1900—Hershey’s chocolate bar
1900-1910—George Washington Carver finds new uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans
1901—A&P incorporates with 200 stores (in 1912, expands with cash and carry format)
1903—Dole canned pineapple
1903—Kellogg adds sugar to corn flakes, boosting popularity
1903—Pepsi Cola
1904—Quaker markets first puffed cereal
1906—Pure Food and Drug Act prohibits food adulteration and misbranding
1906—Meat Inspection Act requires Federal inspection of slaughterhouses
1910—Double-crimped can reduces costs for processors
1910—Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour
1911—First vitamin, vitamin B1, discovered
1912—Oreos
1912—Hellman’s mayonnaise
1914—USDA establishes National Extension Service, which employed home economists
1914-18—World War I
1916—USDA prints its first food guide: Food for Young Children
1916—Piggly Wiggly opens first self-service food store
1917—Food Administration under Herbert Hoover conserves food for war effort

1920’s
1920—Charles Birdseye deep-freezes food
1921—White Castle chain of hamburger shops opens
1923—Welsh’s grape jelly
1925—First home mechanical refrigerator, Frigidaire, sold
1926—General Mills creates “Betty Crocker,” symbolizing growing importance of advertising
1928—Peter Pan Peanut Butter
1928—Velveeta
1929—Great Depression begins with stock market crash

1930’s
1930—Vitamins synthesized in the laboratory
1930—Wonder Bread markets first automatically sliced bread
1932—Fritos corn chips
1933-40—New Deal legislation, Great Depression relief and reform
1935—Howard Johnsons begins as franchised restaurant
1935—Rural Electrification Administration extends electricity to countryside
1937—Kraft Macaroni and Cheese Dinner
1937—Spam
1937—McDonald brothers open first drive-in
1940’s
1941—National Victory Garden Program launched
1941—Recommended Daily Allowances published
1943—Bread flour fortified with vitamin B1
1942-46—Food price controls and food rationing during World War II
1942—Dannon yogurt
1942—La Choy canned Chinese foods
1946—National School Lunch Act requires school-provided meals to be nutritionally balanced and have minimum amounts of specific food groups
1946—Maxwell House instant coffee
A Sampling of Innovations, Laws, and Product Introductions in the U.S. Food Industry

1950’s

1950-56—Korean War and postwar readjustment
1951—Swanson produces first frozen meals, pot pies
1952—Campbell’s cookbook, Cooking With Condensed Soup, greatly expands use of soups in casseroles, a characteristic dish of the era
1954—Swanson makes first frozen TV dinner
1954—Ray Kroc buys McDonalds, starts building national chain
1954—Butterball turkey
1956—USDA publishes “Basic Four” food guide
1958—Delaney Clause added to The Pure Food and Drug Act, banned food additives shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals
1958—Rice-a-Roni

1960’s

1961-75—U.S. involvement in Vietnam
1963—Julia Child’s “The French Chef” debuts on television
1964—Carnation Instant Breakfast
1964—Food Stamp Act establishes a national food stamp program
1965—Cool Whip
1965—Shake ‘n’ Bake
1966—Child Nutrition Act begins the school breakfast program
1969, 1971—White House Conferences on Food, Nutrition and Health

1970’s

1970—Hamburger Helper
1970—Quaker Oats 100% Natural granola
1972—Snapple fruit juices
1973—Voluntary nutrition labeling appears on food packages
1973—McDonald’s introduces Egg McMuffin
1974—Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) begins
1976—Perrier
1977—U.S. Senate Committee releases Dietary Goals for the United States

1980’s

1980, 1985—USDA and DHHS publish Dietary Guidelines for Americans
1981—Stouffer’s Lean Cuisine frozen dinners
1982—Diet, Nutrition and Cancer published by National Cancer Institute
1982—Bud Light
1985—Aspartame, a low-calorie intensive sweetener, approved
1986—Pop Secret Microwave Popcorn
1987—Campbell’s Special Request soups
1989—Berlin Wall falls

1990’s

1990’s—Stock market hits historic highs, longest peacetime expansion
1990—USDA and DHHS publish third edition of Dietary Guidelines
1990—Nutrition Education and Labeling Act makes nutrition labeling mandatory
1991—Stouffer’s Homestyle entrees

1993—SnackWell’s cookies and crackers
Mid-1990’s—USDA modernizes its meat and poultry inspection programs in response to food safety concerns
1998—Frito-Lay Wow! chips (made with the fat substitute, olestra)
1998—47 percent of U.S. food dollar is spent away from home

1 Product introductions from Bon Appetit magazine, September 1999.