

Two of the Greatest April Fools' Day Hoaxes

As the famous saying goes, you can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time. But you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

But you can certainly try, and some pranksters have managed to fool millions of the temporarily gullible with their wonderfully creative hoaxes. So what constitutes a truly great April Fools' Day hoax? It's an inspired concept that, when combined with elegant planning and precision execution, fools the maximum number of people into believing the most outlandish of lies.

Here are two of the all-time best:

Nothing Like Fresh-Picked Spaghetti!

In 1957, the pioneering British Broadcasting Corporation became the first to utilize the media of television as a means of promulgating a super-sized hoax. The respected news show "Panorama" ran a 3-minute piece about the spaghetti harvest in Switzerland. It showed footage of farm workers carefully harvesting the delicate strands of spaghetti from the orchards of spaghetti trees.

Images of the freshly harvested spaghetti being laid out in the sun to dry were accompanied by narrative explaining some of the trials and tribulations often faced by spaghetti farmers. It was explained also that that year was an exceptionally fine harvest due to a number of factors, one of which was the virtual disappearance of the "spaghetti weevil," a pest that had caused devastating losses in past seasons. Also noted was the amazingly uniform length of all of the spaghetti strands, a result of many years of patient spaghetti tree breeding.

The hoax was a smashing success. As soon as the show ended, the BBC began to receive hundreds of calls from viewers wanting more information. In some cases the callers even wanted to know how to grow their own spaghetti trees (The BBC's response was brilliant: "place a sprig of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best").

Have it Your Way

In 1998 Burger King Corporation joined in the April Fools' fun (and garnered a whopping amount of free publicity) by announcing the left-handed Whopper. The company took out a full-page ad in USA Today to announce their burger breakthrough.

According to the ad, "the new left-handed sandwich will have all condiments rotated 180 degrees, thereby redistributing the weight of the sandwich so that the bulk of the condiments will skew to the left, thereby reducing the amount of lettuce and other toppings from spilling out the right side of the burger."

Lefties around the nation rejoiced, with thousands of the left-handed burgers ordered nationwide. But many Righties were concerned, making it quite clear as they placed their orders that they wanted the original, right-handed burger. Burger King announced the hoax the next day, but for a brief, shining moment, there was true equality among all non-ambidextrous burger buffs!

Let's be Careful Out There!

Be on your guard for the next great April Fools' hoax. After all, who wouldn't rather be laughing at the fools than to be one of the fools being laughed at! And if you have an idea for the next great hoax, go for it. That's what April Fools' Day is for!