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Häagen-Dazs Doesn't Come From Where You Think It Comes From



By Alison Spiegel



FACEBOOK/HÄAGEN-DAZS

You think you know somebody: you spend long hours on the couch watching TV together, you celebrate birthdays with one another, you even cry to them on occasion. Then this somebody goes and *completely* surprises you. Sound familiar? Allow us to introduce you to Häagen-Dazs: the ice cream company you thought you knew, but you really didn't know at all.

Häagen-Dazs is not from Denmark. It's not from Germany or Sweden either. It comes

from the Bronx. Häagen-Dazs is a New Yorker.

Yep, it's true. While some fans may have already known the real origins of this famed ice cream company, for those who always thought Häagen-Dazs was vaguely European, now you know the truth.

The company has charming roots to be sure — they were just planted on this side of the Atlantic. After working in the family ice cream business, Reuben Mattus, along with his wife Rose, started Häagen-Dazs in the 1960s. According to the company's website, Mattus sold “fruit ice and ice cream pops from a horse-drawn wagon in the bustling streets of the Bronx, New York.” When Mattus and his wife launched their own ice cream business, they started with three flavors: vanilla, chocolate and coffee.

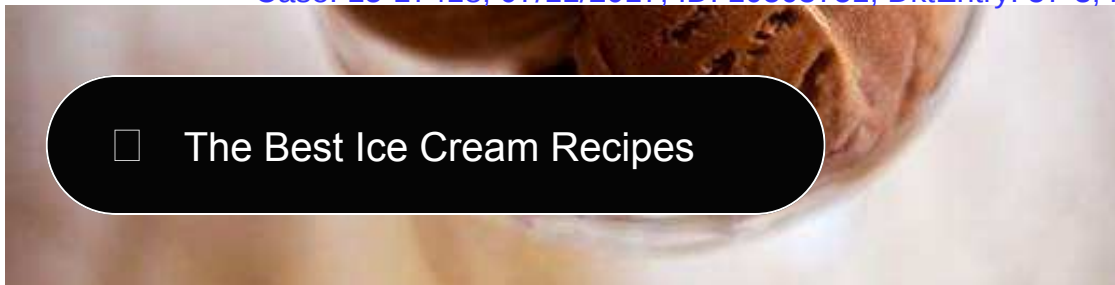
Mattus invented the Danish-sounding Häagen-Dazs name because he thought it conveyed an “aura of the old-world traditions and craftsmanship.” He added an umlaut even though that punctuation mark doesn't exist in the Danish language, because he thought it would make his product stand out. Online magazine Tablet says that Mattus was inspired by Denmark because it was “the only country which saved the Jews during World War II.” According to The New York Times, the original ice cream cartons carried a map of Denmark to give the impression that the product was European.

By 1973, pints were getting shipped around the country and in 1976 the first scoop shop opened. International fame set in after Pillsbury acquired the company in 1983. Today, General Mills owns Häagen-Dazs.

All this doesn't make us love the ice cream any less, but we're now adding Häagen-Dazs to the “foods with surprising origins” file, along with the likes of Hawaiian pizza (hint: not Hawaiian), tacos al pastor and Caesar salad.

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