

11 Famous Food Mascots and Their Stories



Kool-Aid Man

Brand: Kool-Aid

Print Advertising Debut: 1954

This frosty, smiling pitcher has been quenching thirsts with Kool-Aid since 1954. But it took him until 1956 to acquire arms and legs and until 1975 to be dubbed officially as the "Kool-Aid Man." A spot featuring the Kool-Aid Man was included in *Advertising Age's* round-up of best commercials in 1975. In 2006, Kool-Aid Man was voted Favorite Icon during Advertising Week. Over the years, this talented pitcher-about-town has surfed, jet-skiied, played guitar, and starred in his own comic book series and a computer game.

Fun Fact: In 2000, the Kool-Aid Man was honored with a footprint ceremony at Mann's Chinese Theater in Hollywood — he wears a size 15XL.



Ronald McDonald

Brand: McDonald's

TV Commercial Debut: 1966

With his flaming red hair and brand-appropriate red-and-yellow outfits, Ronald McDonald is one of the most iconic food mascots to date. Clowning with burgers has always been one of his main hobbies, but since 1974, Ronald has also been known for inspiring charitable giving for Ronald McDonald House Charities®, which helps critically-ill children and their families.

Fun Fact: In addition to playing Bozo the Clown, longtime NBC and *Today* show weatherman, Willard Scott, was the first person to enact Ronald McDonald live on television. In the 1963 commercials, he wore a paper cup on his nose and a cardboard carry-out-tray hat, bearing a burger, fries, and milkshake



Snap! Crackle! Pop!

Brand: Rice Krispies

Year Introduced: 1933

In homage to the distinctive sound that emits from a bowl of Rice Krispies cereal once it's doused in milk, Kellogg's introduced the company's first food mascots: Snap! Crackle! Pop! These tiny gnomes first appeared in print ads in the early 1930s and became fixtures on the cereal box by 1939. Though they're best known as an inseparable trio, the best way to distinguish between them is by the hats they wear. Snap! always wears a baker's hat; Crackle! dons a red or striped stocking cap; and Pop! prefers a dashing military hat.

Fun Fact: The threesome have different names in different countries. In Finland, they're called Poks! Riks! Raks!; in Mexico, they're known as Pim! Pum! Pam!; and in Germany, their names are Knisper! Knasper! Knusper



Mr. Peanut

Brand: Planters

Year Introduced: 1916

Thanks to the imagination and artistic prowess of schoolboy Antonio Gentile, who submitted a sketch to Planters's brand-icon contest, Mr. Peanut became the company's official mascot. In 1937, Mr. Peanut appeared on his first billboard in New York City's Time Square. By the 1950s, he was starring in television commercials. In 1997, he appeared in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and in 2004, he earned his highest accolade: a star on the Madison Avenue's Advertising Walk of Fame.

Fun Fact: According to [Mr. Peanut's facebook page](#), this top hat- and monocle-wearing groundnut is 2.87 inches tall and weighs 1.48 ounces. He is a Virgo who enjoys starring in and doing his own stunts for movies, as well as training for tree-athalons, contemplating, and problem solving.



Trix Rabbit

Brand: Trix

Year Introduced: 1957

Just three years after Trix hit grocery-store shelves, the Trix Rabbit began his lifelong quest to enjoy a bowlful of the fruity cereal. In his words, he just can't resist those fruity flavors of raspberry red, lemony lemon, orangey orange, wildberry blue, grapey purple, and watermelon. Unfortunately, his tricks always met with the same refrain, "Silly Rabbit, Trix are for kids."

Fun Fact: After box-top voting campaigns in 1976 and 1980, the Trix rabbit was finally rewarded with a taste of the forbidden fruit.



Giant

Brand: Green Giant

Year Introduced: 1925

With his toga-style outfit of leaves, green skin, and impressive stature, it's hard to miss the Jolly Green Giant, who's been a mascot for the Green Giant canned vegetable company since before it was named Green Giant. Known for presiding over the vegetables grown in his valley, the Green Giant was so popular that the Minnesota Valley Canning Company changed its name to his.

Fun Fact: A 55-foot statue of the Giant stands in Blue Earth, MN, the birthplace of this beloved green colossus.



the Tiger

Brand: Frosted Flakes

Year of His First Roar: 1952

The original spoketiger, Tony is considered by admirers to be friendly, loveable, talented, and boastful, and is described as having a "corny" sense of humor (*har har*). A four-page color ad spread in *Life* magazine in 1953 cemented his status as top tiger. Until he passed away in 2005, Thurl Ravenscroft performed Tony's voice, including his signature catchphrase, "They're GR-R-REAT!"

Fun Fact: Tony was up against three other candidates for spokesanimal in 1952 — Katy the Kangaroo, Elmo the Elephant, and Newt the Gnu — but his tigerness was voted most popular.



Poppin' Fresh Pillsbury Doughboy

Brand: Pillsbury

TV Commercial Debut: 1965

For those who are unfamiliar with this famed friend of the crescent roll, Poppin' Fresh is described as a short, pudgy character the color of unbaked dough with irresistible bright blue eyes, a smiling face, and a world-famous giggle. Although he was originally created as an advertising vehicle for refrigerated dough, the Doughboy became the face of all Pillsbury-brand products thanks to his popularity. Within three years of his debut, 87% of consumers recognized him by name!



Toucan Sam

Brand: Froot Loops

Cereal Box Debut: 1963

Toucan Sam's famously large orange-red-pink-and-black bill has helped him sniff out his favorite fruit-flavored cereal since 1963. As the saying goes, this tropical parrot "follows his nose ... it always knows" where to find a good-tasting breakfast. Toucan Sam lives in an animated jungle, where he guides an array of human-like characters to his favorite food.

Fun Fact: Since 1994, Toucan Sam has shared commercial appearances with his nephews, who help him outwit dastardly enemies like mad scientist Dr. Peacock, Blackbeak the pirate, and the Greedy Witch Doctor.



Helping Hand

Brand: Hamburger Helper

Year Introduced: 1977

Always one to help busy moms with their dinner dilemmas, the Helping Hand was introduced as part of an advertising campaign called, "When You Need a Helping Hand." This four-digit lefty showed moms that ground beef (and later tuna and chicken) combined with boxed pasta and premeasured seasoning packets make a delightful dinner in a hurry.

Fun Fact: The Helping Hand is not shy about appearing in costume. He wore Western cowboy garb to introduce Chili Macaroni; donned a sombrero for Cheesy Taco Bake; embodied a Venetian gondolier for Helping Hand Pasta; played a tray-toting Italian waiter for Zesty and Cheesy Italian; and snuggled up in a black Russian fur hat for the Creamy Sauce Beef Stroganoff mix.



Dig 'Em

Brand: Honey Smacks

Year Introduced: 1972

Affectionately referred to as the little frog with the big voice, Dig 'Em the frog was introduced on Honey Smacks packaging in 1972. This lover of sweetened puffed wheat followed a long string of spokescharacters, including Cliffy the Clown, Smaxey the Seal, and the Smackin' Bandit. Dig 'Em is described as a friendly prankster who likes to play tricks, especially on adults.

Fun Fact: In 1986, Kellogg's retired Dig 'Em from Honey Smacks packaging, but consumer outcry prompted his triumphant return one year later.