

# What Iowans love to eat

Iowans turn tail on corn dogs, but sink their teeth into corn on the cob, Iowa chops, Muscatine melons and Dutch letters.

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**H**ave Iowans completely lost their marbles — or just their taste buds?

The Des Moines Register's latest Iowa Poll, conducted in mid-September, asked the state's adults to rank the following Iowa-inspired foods using the categories of "favorite," "like" or "don't care for."

Corn on the cob, Muscatine melons, corn dogs, Maid-Rite sandwiches, Dutch letters, Maytag blue cheese, Steak de Burgo and Iowa pork chops. Which shocking choice was mentioned often in the "don't care for"

column? Corn dogs.

This battered treat of the Iowa State Fair ranked second to last in this category — a mere 4 percentage points ahead of Maytag blue cheese.

Almost half of people didn't know what Steak de Burgo was.

Other findings of the poll were less surprising:

• Our favorite food is corn on the cob (57 percent) and pork chops (46 percent).

• Dutch letters were most popular in Iowa's third congressional district, which includes the town of Pella.

• Muscatine melons were more of a favorite food among people 65 and older (42 percent) more than people 18 to 34 (19 percent).

• Those who make less than \$30,000 a year love Maid-Rite sandwiches more than those who make more than \$70,000 a year. We're reminded that blue-collar mom Roseanne did popularize loose-meat sandwiches on her TV show.

But the low ranking for corn dogs? "It's un-American," said Davenport resident Steve Prachar, who answered that corn dogs were among his favorites. Of course, Prachar is on the Atkin's Diet, has lost 60 pounds and is no longer eating the battered dogs.

Poll participant and Kiron resident Roland Talcott placed corn dogs in the "don't care for" category: "They give me indigestion," he said.

The poll shows that older Iowans dislike corn dogs more than younger adults, with 57 percent of those 55 and older saying they don't care for the food compared to 30 percent of those 18 to 34.

Dislike of corn dogs doesn't cross religious or political boundaries. Catholics and born-again Christians about equally turn their noses at the treat — so do a comparable number of Republicans and Democrats.

Still, there is just something too traditionally Iowan about the corn dog for it to be tossed in the gutter like a plain frank.

At the Iowa State Fair, no self-respecting presidential candidate sold his health care plan over a plate of Steak de Burgo or salad greens with Maytag blue cheese.

They pose for photos tightly gripping a corn dog, as if it's a federal balanced budget about to slip away. As they flash million-dollar smiles, the corn dog's greasy napkin clings to their tailored suits and cuff links.

Democratic candidate Joe Lieberman, who is Jewish, was photographed eating a fried Twinkie this year.

Candidate Dennis Kucinich, a vegan, posed with a butterless ear of corn and bean burrito.

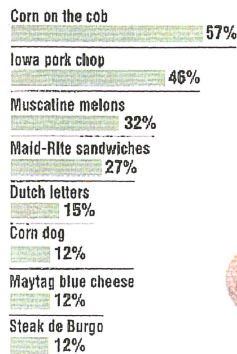
"Truth be told, John Kerry likes corn dogs. It wasn't a tactical move," insisted Laura Capps, campaign spokeswoman. "His taste buds dictate it, not the preferences of others."

Calvin Campbell isn't buying the corn dog findings.

The owner of Campbell's Concessions, which sells a foot-long corn dog on a stick at the fair, said corn dog sales increased

## Corn, pork top the list

A sample of Iowans let us know which local foods are their favorites.



Source: Iowa Poll of 803 adults age 18 or older taken Sept. 12-16; margin of error, 3.5 percentage points.

## Have a favorite?

We'd love to see recipes that use these Iowa foods — corn, pork chops, melon, Maytag blue cheese.

Send us a recipe for one or all of them, and we'll publish them in an upcoming IowaLife section. Deadline is Oct. 15.

You can reach us by —

- Fax: (515) 286-2504
- E-mail: [des-feat@dmreg.com](mailto:des-feat@dmreg.com)
- Mail to:  
Favorite Recipes  
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## Iowa food favorites

Iowans were asked in The Des Moines Register's latest poll to rate their feelings about some foods associated with Iowa.

	A favorite food	A likable food	Don't care for it	Not sure
Corn on the cob	57%	40%	3%	—
Iowa pork chop	46	47	6	1%
Muscatine melon	32	44	15	9
Maid-Rite sandwiches	27	54	14	5
Dutch letters	15	24	17	44
Corn dog	12	40	44	4
Steak de Burgo	12	23	17	48
Maytag blue cheese	12	20	48	20

Source: Iowa Poll of 803 adults

THE REGISTER

# Fair's Swift skeptical about corn dog results

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10 percent this year compared to last year.

Years ago, Michael Jackson and his brothers — as “The Jackson Five” — bought Campbell's corn dogs at the State Fair.

In 2001, a press release from the Iowa Department of Economic Development even proclaimed: “Nothing says summer in Iowa like a ketchup-covered corn dog, kids in strollers and endless rows of livestock. . .”

Iowans sometimes act like they invented the corn dog.

We didn't.

Two brothers from Dallas in the early 1940s saw a street vendor “selling hot dogs coated in cornmeal batter that were baked in molds shaped like ears of corn,”

according to the history of hot dogs at [www.statefairfoods.com](http://www.statefairfoods.com).

Maybe Iowans are on a health kick? A packet of frozen corn dogs from Dahl's has 180 calories, 12 grams of fat and 560 milligrams of sodium per dog.

Kathie Swift, spokeswoman for the Iowa State Fair, was beside herself at the poll's findings.

“It is the ubiquitous fair food, even though sometimes I think that drumsticks are giving corn dogs a run for their money,” she said.

“You have people that confess with a shamed face that they ate six in one day at the fair. Maybe it's not the politically correct answer in a poll to say ‘Oh, I love corn dogs.’”

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## About the poll

The Iowa Poll, conducted for The Des Moines Register by Selzer & Co. Inc. of Des Moines, is based on interviews with 803 Iowans age 18 or older. Interviewers contacted households with randomly selected telephone numbers. Percentages based on the full sample may have a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Republishing the copyright Iowa Poll without credit to The Des Moines Register is prohibited. The poll, conducted Sept. 12-16, asked the following:

I'm going to mention some foods associated with Iowa. For each, please tell me if you consider it a favorite, something you like, or something you don't really care for: Corn on the cob. Muscatine melons. Corn dog. Maid Rite sandwiches. Dutch letters. Iowa pork chop. Maytag blue cheese. Steak de burgo