



Interesting Egg Trivia

**Eggs & the Chef's Hat **



A chef hat, also sometimes referred to as a toque-blanche, is part of a chef's uniform. The brimless chef hat covers the entire head of hair to eliminate any stray hair from falling into the dishes being prepared. Traditionally, a chef hat is quite tall, from 9 to 12" (228-305mm), which has vertical pleats that run around the body of the hat. Made of either stiffly starched fabric, mostly cotton and cotton blends, or of paper, the chef hat can come in either white or black.

Several versions of the origin of the chef hat prevail. One story goes that the chef for King Henry VIII was going bald and was beheaded after the king found a hair in his soup. Henceforth, all royal chefs were required to wear a chef hat.

Another tale states the chef hat came about during the time of the ancient Assyrians. Because a common method of the day for overthrowing an unpopular monarch was to poison him, only the most loyal and trusted men were allowed to become court chefs. As acknowledgement of their lofty position, chefs were allowed to wear a crown of sorts. Fashioned after the style of crown the king wore, the ribs on the side of the king's crown were depicted by pleats on the crowns of the chefs.

Traditional versions of the chef hat always include one hundred pleats. In keeping with the Assyrian hat theory, it is said that the reason a chef hat had one hundred pleats is because a master chef knew how to prepare eggs one hundred different ways. In that time and part of the world, eggs were considered to be a symbol for the universe, and as such were highly regarded.