



By Patty Jo Sawvel



Krispy Kreme has been a Winston-Salem tradition since 1937, but lately this homegrown company has been gaining a lot of attention all over the United States.

When Krispy Kreme went public in April 2000, interest in its doughnuts and the company grew by leaps and bounds. Television continues to take a liking to Krispy Kreme as well. The signature Hot Original Glazed doughnut has appeared on Oprah, ER, Saturday Night Live, NYPD and the Today Show. National magazines such as Vogue, Good Housekeeping, Forbes and The New Yorker have bragged on this sweet delight.

Why all the fuss about a doughnut?

The Experience

To answer that question, you'll have to experience a hot doughnut for yourself. For your first visit to the Krispy Kreme store, be sure the neon 'Hot-Doughnuts-Now' sign is glowing. And then, prepare yourself for a total body experience. All five senses will be activated.

Imagine stepping through the doors and breathing in sweet scented air. As you look through the glass into the production room, perfectly shaped rings of dough are riding up and down on little green trays inside the proof box. And while the process is relatively quiet—the whole store hums with excitement.

After 'proofing', the doughnuts are dropped into pure hot vegetable shortening. As they float along, one side is cooked to a golden-brown color before the doughnuts are gently flipped. Once cooked, the doughnuts slide under a waterfall of glaze. And then it's time to pick up your fresh hot doughnut.

Here is how some people have described their first bite: 'so sensationally gooey and warm you will just want to shiver,' 'fried nectar puffed up with yeast,' 'a religious experience,' and 'light as a frosted snowflake.'

The Krispy Kreme experience all began on July 13, 1937, when Vernon Rudolph brought his secret recipe for yeast-raised doughnuts to Winston-Salem. He rented a building in what is now historic Old Salem. Intending to operate as a wholesaler, Rudolph converted his car for delivery.

The glazed doughnuts caught on quickly and soon people were stopping by the store requesting hot doughnuts. Rudolph listened to his customers and expanded into the retail business. He cut a hole in the store wall and created 'window service.'



The Consistency



In 1947, Rudolph opened up the Ivy Avenue facility and herein lies the second secret to Krispy Kreme's success—its consistency. Every Krispy Kreme doughnut, sold from coast to coast, begins in the giant four-story mix plant on Ivy Avenue. Making 2500 pounds of dry doughnut mix at a time, ingredients are blended and sent to the first floor for bagging. It sounds simple, but this is not just a giant version of grandmother's kitchen. Here, everything is checked and rechecked. Before the trucks, carrying 50,000 pounds of flour are allowed to unload; a core sample is taken to the second floor lab to test protein levels, moisture, and ash. Sugar and other ingredients are likewise checked for quality. If the goods fail the test, the entire shipment is rejected.

At this point, the computer is used to precisely measure the weight of each ingredient to be added. Once the batch of mix is blended, a check is run again. A sample of each batch is sent back to the second floor where a full-scale Krispy Kreme doughnut machine is used to produce a batch of doughnuts for inspection.

This brings up another point with Krispy Kreme's consistency. Every piece of doughnut making equipment is built at the Ivy Avenue facility before it is shipped to Krispy Kreme stores.

As you would expect, the Ivy Avenue distribution department also uses the latest technology for receiving, collating and shipping the orders. Using a bar code and scan system, orders from individual stores come into the center via computer, are scanned for accuracy when the order is picked, and again before shipping.

With every Krispy Kreme store using the same mix, equipment, and production process, from the same source—it is easy to see why every Krispy Kreme doughnut from coast-to-coast tastes like a Krispy Kreme.

The History



The final reason why Krispy Kreme is so well loved is because its history is woven into the fabric of families for generations. Many families write to Krispy Kreme to tell of their family traditions.

One mother who no longer lives near a Krispy Kreme wrote, "I have shared wonderful (childhood) memories with my husband and three children, now ages 38, 34, and 27, and we try to get Krispy Kremes each time we visit family."

Young married couples write to tell of sharing the joy of their 'other love'—Krispy Kreme, with their newly betrothed.

One young bride was not convinced that standing in line for a hot doughnut for 30 minutes was going to be worth the wait. But the groom went on to write, "My wife is now in love with Krispy Kreme and she wants to open a store."

Like many people, this man got his first taste of the Hot Original Glazed as a youth by selling doughnuts for fundraisers. Because Krispy Kreme allows groups to make a significant profit and people love the doughnuts anyway—it's a win-win situation. Who knows, over the years, how many baseball fields have been built, school trips children have taken, and churches have financed additions—all with help of Krispy Kreme. In 1999 alone, Krispy Kreme helped nonprofit groups nationwide to raise over \$16 million. All of these people share a history with Krispy Kreme.

During this same year, Krispy Kremes across America made 11,000 dozen doughnuts an hour. That's 3 million fresh hot doughnuts a day. And America is demanding more. In the next five years, Krispy Kreme plans to nearly double its stores, from the existing 144 to 260.

What about you? Are you getting your fair share of fresh hot Krispy Kremes?.