Chocolate Chip Fact or Fiction?

(1) The true story of the invention of chocolate chip cookies is hard to figure out. The facts of the story have become mixed up over time, and people have added their own ideas to it. But there are some facts that are clear and true about the creation of Ruth Wakefield’s tasty recipe.

**The Basic Ingredients**

(2) Ruth Graves Wakefield completed a degree in what is now called family and consumer sciences at Framingham State University in 1924. She was a dietician, taught home economics, and gave lectures about food in a time before there were such things as television or the Food Network. Then she and her husband, Kenneth, bought the Toll House Inn and opened a restaurant there near Whitman, Massachusetts.

(3) Ruth’s cooking made the restaurant famous. People enjoyed coming to it for fine meals. They liked having a nice dining experience. They thought Ruth’s desserts were the best! This is where the legend of the chocolate chip cookie begins. But there are many different accounts of the tale.

**Bar Blooper?**

(4) A recipe that Ruth baked was for Butter Drop Do cookies. She served them with ice cream. One of the most repeated stories about Ruth’s recipe starts with a missing ingredient. The story goes that Ruth realized she was out of baker’s chocolate. So she cut up a Nestlé chocolate bar and used that in her cookies instead.

(5) A slightly different tale claims she didn’t have the nuts the recipe called for. So she chopped up a Nestlé chocolate bar and added it instead of nuts.

(6) A third telling says the recipe wasn’t Ruth’s doing at all. The Nestlé chocolate was added to the cookie dough because of the big mixer on the counter. Its motion caused a chocolate bar to fall into the batter from a shelf above. Rather than throw the batter away, the batch was made. And so was history!

(7) Others argue that with all her food training and because she ran a fancy restaurant with strict rules, Ruth wouldn’t have run out of chocolate. She wouldn’t have had such an accident. They think she probably invented the recipe not by mistake, but by experimenting. She worked hard until she found what she thought was the most delicious way to make the old recipe for Butter Drop Do cookies.

**A Cookie Hit**

(8) Ruth’s Toll House Crunch cookies, as she called them then, were a huge success. The recipe was featured on a radio program. It was printed in newspapers. Soon people all over New England were baking the cookies with the chocolate pieces.
As more people baked the cookies, demand for Nestlé chocolate rose. The company noticed and made improvements. First they redesigned the candy bars to make them easier to break into pieces. Then they included a special cutter. Finally, they started shaping the chocolate into small chips especially for the cookies.

The Chocolate Deal

Some people question why Ruth used Nestlé chocolate for her cookies. Some say Andrew Nestlé, the owner of the company, gave her the first bar as a gift because he liked to stay at the inn. Others say after she began using Nestlé chocolate, she contacted the company and made a deal with them.

Another part of the story says she was paid $1 and a lifetime supply of chocolate for her recipe. Other people believed Nestlé hired her as an adviser in exchange for her recipe. No matter what, the recipe for Toll House cookies has been printed on packages of Nestlé chocolate chips since 1939.

Despite what is true and what is make-believe, the fact remains that people love Ruth Wakefield’s invention and are likely to enjoy chocolate chip cookies for many years to come.
The Mistake that Bounced

(1) More rubber! That was the cry during World War II. The U.S. army needed tires for trucks and boots for soldiers, but the enemy had control of the rubber trees.

(2) Back home in the United States people scrimped and saved. They donated old tires, boots, even raincoats to the cause. Finally, the government asked scientists to invent something to replace rubber.

(3) Two men working for different companies tried to meet the challenge. One was James Wright of General Electric and the other was Earl L. Warrick of Dow. Without knowing they were working with the same material, they experimented by mixing silicone oil with boric acid. But instead of rubber, what they made was a mistake! The stuff didn’t work at all like they expected. If they threw a glob on the floor, it bounced much higher than a ball made of rubber! Yet, if they left some resting on a counter, it oozed into a puddle! It would never do for making tires or boots!

(4) The men asked other scientists for ideas about how to use it. But no one could figure out what to do with the goo they’d nicknamed “nutty putty,” or “bouncing putty.” Still, each man applied to the government for the right to say he had invented it. This right is called a patent.

(5) Earl filed his request before James but the credit for the new item is most often given to James. People think this is because he worked for General Electric, the company who sold the first large batch to Peter Hodgson. He was the man who finally had an idea for how to use the invention gone wrong.

(6) Children can thank Peter, an advertising agent, for thinking of that sticky blob as a toy they might enjoy. He saw some scientists playing with the putty at a party. At the time, he was working on a catalog for the Block Shop, a toy store in Connecticut, and thought the scientists’ toy should be included. “I couldn’t help noticing how people with busy schedules wasted as much as 15 minutes…just (playing with) and stretching it.”

(7) Ruth Fallgatter, the woman who owned the Block Shop agreed. Peter hired a college student to divide the putty into small amounts they put in clear cases. Then they listed the putty as a toy for adults. It sold well in the catalog, but Ruth decided not to include it the next year, thinking the putty didn’t have a future.

(8) Peter disagreed and thought children would love it. He began packaging the glop in eggs and got the legal right to give it a new name—Silly Putty! He was right! Children loved Silly Putty and bought so much that Peter became a millionaire!

(9) Of course, kids found other ways to use Silly Putty. When they weren’t bouncing it, they discovered it could pick up ink. When they pressed it onto printed pages like newspaper comics, it made copies of the pictures. They also marveled at the way they could stretch it like crazy but break it if they hit it with a hammer!
Perhaps if Peter Hodgson had bought that first batch of putty from Dow, Earl Warrick would have been remembered as the inventor of Silly Putty instead of James Wright. But, though Earl and James invented it by mistake, Silly Putty is recognized as one of the most popular toys of all time. In 2000, it went on display at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. And in 2001, it joined the National Toy Hall of Fame as a toy that has been really good for children’s creativity and learning!
Izzy and his Cardboard Bike

(1) Cardboard boxes have long been a good, cheap building material for children. Give a kid a box, and he or she may remodel it into a hideout, a pretend boat, or even a castle. But a man in Israel is using recycled cardboard to make fully useable bicycles. They are single speed with environmentally friendly braking systems. And they are strong enough to support adult riders weighing over two hundred and fifty pounds!

(2) In 2009, Ishar Gafni, known as Izzy, got the idea for making the bike while talking with some friends at the local bike shop. Someone told about a man who had made a cardboard canoe. “It was this canoe that was sitting in the back of my head when it suddenly struck me,” Izzy said. “Why not make a bicycle out of cardboard, too? “Engineers and Izzy’s friends told him it would be impossible. But he proved them wrong three years later when he test rode the first model of his cardboard bike.

(3) Izzy experimented with Japanese paper-folding to find the strongest folds. Using this art form called origami, Izzy had to fold the cardboard in several different directions. “Making a cardboard box is easy…” he said, “but to make a bicycle was extremely difficult…It took a year and a half, with lots of testing and failure until I got it right.”

(4) There are other steps besides Izzy’s folding procedures that make the bikes strong. Izzy sticks the folded pieces together with a mix of varnish and glue. Varnish is like a clear paint that dries hard and makes things shiny. Izzy also gives the bikes a secret coating he invented that makes them fire and waterproof. He has to. Cardboard is paper and can burn. When it gets wet it weakens and can collapse. The finishing touch is to paint the bike with a shiny paint called lacquer.

(5) Izzy has gone on to build four more full-size models and one for kids, too. If the bikes work out, he has plans for making wheelchairs, strollers, and other items from recycled cardboard using the folding techniques he has devised.

(6) Using cardboard makes the bikes lightweight and inexpensive to build. It only costs about $9 to $12 for each one. But building a factory to make the bikes may make them cost more than $9 to $12 at first. Izzy’s hope, however, is that eventually the cost of the bikes will be lower than regular bikes and people in really poor countries will be able to get them for free.