

You want giant fries with that?

by Henry Verden

**Wisconsinites know the meaning of large economy-size food.
Really large economy size.**



Wisconsinites love large portions. We like big pieces of meat, baked potatoes the size of your head, and stacks of pancakes the size of dinner plates. Large dinner plates. Fish fry is the unofficial state dinner. Our state motto could be “All you can eat.”

It should come as no surprise that dotting the landscape of our fair state are monuments to our cultural obsession; graven images to that which we hold dear and cover with mayonnaise, butter, or barbeque sauce. Icons of our collective indulgence. All hail giant food.

We can't resist planting one of these monsters by the roadside at any opportunity. Almost every farm stand of any size displays giant ears of corn, watermelon slices, pumpkins, and who knows what else. Any town that claims to be the home of some food usually has a statue of that food somewhere. A few giant foods transcend the commonplace and stand out as culinary beacons. Here are some giants among the giants.

Chatty Belle

At the end of the 1964 World's Fair, the Wisconsin pavilion was moved from New York to Neillsville, Wisconsin, where it now houses a radio station. Next to the station stands Chatty Belle, the world's largest talking cow. For a mere 25 cents Chatty will hold forth on dairy facts, nutritional information, and extol the virtues of cheese.



National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame

This museum in Hayward, Wisconsin, gives you the opportunity to check out thousands of fishing lures, rods, reels, and outboard motors. The 7.5 acres around the Hall of Fame hold the real treasure: giant fish including walleye, bluegill, coho salmon, largemouth and smallmouth bass, rainbow trout, and perch. The crowning glory is the musky-shaped Shrine to Anglers. It's one-half city block long,

four and one-half stories tall, and is the largest fiberglass statue in the world. Inside the Shrine are exhibits leading to the observation deck in its gaping maw.



Big Burger

Seymour, Wisconsin, is the birthplace of the hamburger, where the largest burger ever cooked was made—8,266 pounds on August 4, 2001. To commemorate that event a full-scale replica now sits atop the grill on which the record burger was cooked. To commemorate

Bountiful Cupboard

the man who created America's favorite sandwich, a 16-foot statue of "Hamburger Charlie" Nagreen holding his creation stands across the street.



Weinermobile

This is without doubt the most famous giant food in the world. The original was built by Oscar Mayer's nephew, Carl, in 1936. New models came out in 1952, 1969, 1988, 1995, and the current model hit the streets in 2004. There are six Weinermobiles on the road at present, each manned by two Hotdoggers. The Hotdoggers are college students who serve one year on the rolling sausages traveling over 50,000 miles a year. By any measure, Weinermobiles are huge, measuring 60 hot dogs long, 24 hot dogs tall, and 18 hot dogs wide. (They weigh 14,000 pounds.) Usually Weinermobiles are spread all across the country, but once a year in the spring they mass in the parking lot at Madison Area Technical College for a unique drivers' education that is part of the Hotdog High training program. The Oscar Mayer Weinermobile is a great American icon of a great American icon.



F.A.S.T. Corporation

Where do a lot of these creations come from? F.A.S.T. Corporation in Sparta, Wisconsin, is one of the premier fiberglass sculpture companies in the United States. They have hundreds of molds in stock and will custom design whatever your heart desires. F.A.S.T. is one-stop shopping for giant pineapples, ears of corn, apples, hamburgers, ice cream cones, pumpkins, beer cans and bottles, and more.



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 1201 Division Street
 Neillsville, WI 54456

National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame
 10360 Hall of Fame Drive
 Hayward, WI 54843
 (715) 634-4440
www.freshwater-fishing.org

Big Hamburger & Charlie Nagreen
 East of Main Street on Depot Street
 Seymour Chamber of Commerce
 (920) 833-6053

Oscar Mayer Weinermobile
www.kraftfoods.com/oscardmayer

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