

# THE KING OF THE CONDIMENTS

# Mustard

## • MOUNT HOREB MUSTARD MUSEUM •



It took a crisis to change Barry Levenson's life. He made the move from lawyer to mustard magnate and all of us are better for it.

In 1986, Barry Levenson, Assistant Attorney General for the State of Wisconsin, had an epiphany. He was a rabid Red Sox fan who had just watched his team lose the World Series. Despondent, he found himself wandering down an aisle in an all-night supermarket, the condiment aisle. He was stunned when a voice emanated from the mustard section: "If you collect us, they will come."



Barry's life had found meaning again. He bought twelve jars that night and never looked back. Today, Barry presides over a mustard empire including an emporium, a university, a publishing company, and the renowned Mount Horeb Mustard Museum.

### Why Mustard

What draws Barry to mustard? "I've always liked

mustard ever since I was a kid." Says Barry, "I have relatives that remind me about how much I liked it. I guess it's not really an accident that it's become such an obsession with me."

I asked him what he thinks has spurred the rise in mustard's popularity. "It's an affordable luxury. If you want a great bottle of wine, you're going to spend \$80, \$90, or \$100. A great mustard is under \$25 and it lasts longer. You can confidently drive home, too, without needing a Breathalyzer™."

Another reason behind the popularity of mustard is that they are as varied as the places where they are made. But no matter where a jar of mustard comes from or what the flavor, the basics remain the same. Mustard the condiment is mustard seed or mustard flour combined with a liquid. "Sometimes the seeds are soaked and then ground; sometimes they're ground and then soaked," explained Barry. How they're ground—fine, coarse, or not at all—also makes a difference in the

finished product. After that the similarities end and the endless variety of liquids and other ingredients make each mustard unique.

### The Museum

The Mustard Museum opened in 1992 after Barry left the practice of law to devote full time to his passion. Barry explains, "In 1991 I realized I could make a living at this and I just went off the deep end and opened the museum." There were 900 mustards in the collection at that time. The collection quickly outgrew the old location and the museum moved down Main Street to its current expansive location. It's a mind-boggling experience, starting in the MustardPiece Theater where you will be regaled with the history of what Barry calls the king of condiments. Then it's off to the displays.

The museum now contains around 4,900 mustards with more being added all the time, many of them from visitors. There are also many mustard



(ABOVE CENTER) Barry Levenson, the Maestro of Mustard. (ABOVE LEFT) A small portion of the Mustard Museum's collection of mustard tins. (RIGHT) The Mustard Museum is easy to find on Main Street in Mount Horeb, thanks to the subtle, mustard-colored façade.

Mustard jars once graced many tables in the early parts of the last century. Many beautiful examples are on display at the museum thanks to Barry's collecting and generous contributions from visitors and fans.



tins and mustard pots on display. All fifty states and over 60 countries are represented by the jars, bottles, tins, and tubes that line the shelves and fill the display cases. Filling the spaces between the mustard displays are collections of other mustard memorabilia such as advertisements, books, games, toys, and the original French's Mustard jar costume.

in August, the museum celebrates National Mustard Day, a fun-filled day featuring Oscar Mayer hot dogs (free to anyone who uses mustard only), two entertainment stages, games, mustard samples, Culver's Mustard Custard, and more mustard madness.

**The Emporium**

After slaking your need for mustard knowledge,

it's time to try and buy. The museum store offers hundreds of mustards for purchase, all arranged into categories including fruit, Dijon, spirits, imported, Wisconsin, and exotics.

Best of all, walk to the back and visit the tasting

area where you can try every one of the mustards you see in the store. Hot sauces, various other sauces, crackers, pretzels, mustard wear, and mustard books are all well represented.

While we are on the subject of books, Barry

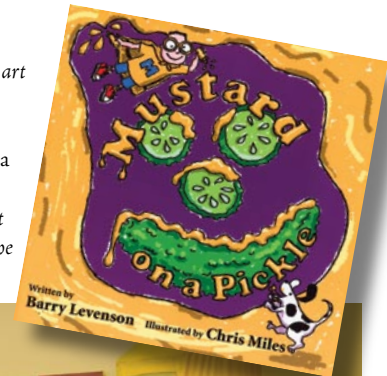
just published his third, a children's book titled *Mustard on a Pickle*. It's a departure from his two previous books *Habeas Codfish*, a study of food and the law, and *The Seventh Game*, a reflection on the 35 World Series games that have gone seven games. "One of the things I'm doing is trying to encourage children to eat more mustard, so this is a good way to do it, I think," said Barry. "Unfortunately,

The first Saturday

**Poupon U. cheer:**  
Who needs Harvard,  
Who needs Yale?  
At Poupon U. you'll never fail.  
Stanford, Princeton? Big mistake!  
Poupon U.'s a piece of cake.



(BELOW LEFT) The museum gift shop. (BELOW RIGHT) Mustard art and the original French's mustard mascot. (RIGHT) Barry's newest literary masterpiece *Mustard on a Pickle*. The Mustard Museum is hosting a contest for the next great mustard-based children's story. The top two entries receive \$2,500.



## In the Land of Mustard

Wisconsin has its fair share of fine, locally made mustards. Many of the mustards made in Wisconsin are not made with mustard seeds grown here, but there are many excellent producers and blenders according to Barry Levenson.

Here's a sample of some you should try:



Bayfield Apple Company  
(800) 363-4526  
[www.bayfieldapple.com](http://www.bayfieldapple.com)  
Apple and Deviled Red Currant



Uncle Phil's Mustard  
Wisconsin Spice Company  
(920) 361-3555  
[www.wisconsin spice.com](http://www.wisconsin spice.com)  
Stone Ground, Honey Glaze,  
Polish, Honey, Dijon, Spicy  
Brown, Sweet and Sassy



Silver Spring Gardens, Inc.  
(800) 826-7322  
[www.silverspringfoods.com](http://www.silverspringfoods.com)  
Beer 'n Brat, Deli Style, Chipotle,  
Jalapeño, Honey, Mustard 'n Mayo,  
Dill, Dijon, Habanero, Pepperdew  
and Organic Horseradish



Hawkwind  
(608) 356-2926  
[www.hawkwindllc.com](http://www.hawkwindllc.com)  
Hawkwind Heat and Clem's Hot Pepper



Honey Acres  
(800) 558-7745  
[www.honeyacres.com](http://www.honeyacres.com)  
Honey Dill



Wisconsin Wilderness  
(800) 359-3039  
[www.wisconsinwilderness.com](http://www.wisconsinwilderness.com)  
Cranberry, Honey, Garlic  
Balsamic, Stone Ground Wine,  
Cranberry Horseradish



East Shore Specialty Foods  
(800) 236-1069  
[www.eastshorefoods.com](http://www.eastshorefoods.com)  
Sweet and Tangy, Coarse with  
Dill, Key Lime with Ginger, Mild  
with Tarragon, Garlic and Pepper,  
Chipotle and Jalapeño



Martha's Hot Mustard  
(608) 723-4711  
[www.allmustard.com](http://www.allmustard.com)  
Hot only



Koop's  
Olds Products  
Company  
(309) 820-7583  
Horseradish, Honey,  
Spicy Brown, Dijon



children in our society tend to use that other noxious condiment, ketchup. It's unfortunate because according to the National Condiment Research Council, ketchup is now the leading cause of childhood stupidity." Barry even started his own publishing company, Chapter Eleven Press. Barry says, "I decided it's better to be Chapter Eleven than be in Chapter Eleven."

**Poupon U.**  
One of Barry's proudest accomplishments is founding Poupon U., America's mustard college. The classes aren't too tough. Actually, you can get your diploma before you take any classes or even enroll for that matter. The school's motto is "If you're not fussy, neither are we." There's also a school cheer and even a school fight song. The museum store has

a section that features Poupon U. T-shirts, sweatshirts, scrubs, tote bags, and more emblazoned with the school emblem. It's also where you can obtain your diploma for degrees such as Doctor of Diddle-Squat and Juris Dufus.

Barry obviously has a lot of fun with what he's doing but behind the jokester is a man on a serious mission to bring visitors to the museum and bring to his store and website the finest mustards

from around the world. He is truly the King of Mustards. Long live the King.



**ON-LINE EXTRA**

Visit [www.bountifulcupboard.com](http://www.bountifulcupboard.com) for more of the Mustard Museum's favorite recipes.

• **IF YOU GO** •

Mount Horeb Mustard Museum  
100 West Main Street  
Mount Horeb, WI 53572  
(800) 438-6878  
[www.mustardmuseum.com](http://www.mustardmuseum.com)



**SLIMM & NUNNE MUSTARD SPICE CAKE**

**Ingredients:**

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 2¼ cups cake flour               | ½ cup Slimm & Nunne Sweet & Nicely Hot Mustard |
| 1½ teaspoons baking powder       | ⅓ cup light molasses                           |
| ½ teaspoon baking soda           | 2 tablespoons honey                            |
| ½ teaspoon salt                  | ¼ cup unsweetened applesauce                   |
| 1½ tablespoons ground cinnamon   | ¾ cup buttermilk                               |
| ½ teaspoon ground ginger         |  |
| ½ teaspoon ground cloves         |  |
| ½ teaspoon ground cardamom       |  |
| ½ teaspoon Coleman's dry mustard |  |
| ½ cup unsalted butter, softened  |  |
| ⅔ cup sugar                      |  |
| 3 jumbo eggs, beaten             |  |

**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9 x 9 or 11 x 7 glass baking dish and set aside.
2. Sift the dry ingredients (except the sugar) and put aside.
3. Cream together the shortening and sugar. Beat in the eggs. Add the Slimm & Nunne Mustard, molasses,

- applesauce, and honey and beat until smooth.
4. Add the dry ingredients alternately with the buttermilk, about a third at a time, blending just until no trace of the dry ingredients shows. Batter will be thin.
5. Pour into the greased baking dish and bake about fifty minutes or until the sides begin to brown and a knife plunged into the middle comes out clean. Let cool in the pan and store, well wrapped, in the refrigerator. The cake improves with age; wait at least one day, if you can.

Yield: not enough!

*Slimm & Nunne is the Mustard Museum's own brand, but you can use any sweet, smooth mustard you have on hand.*