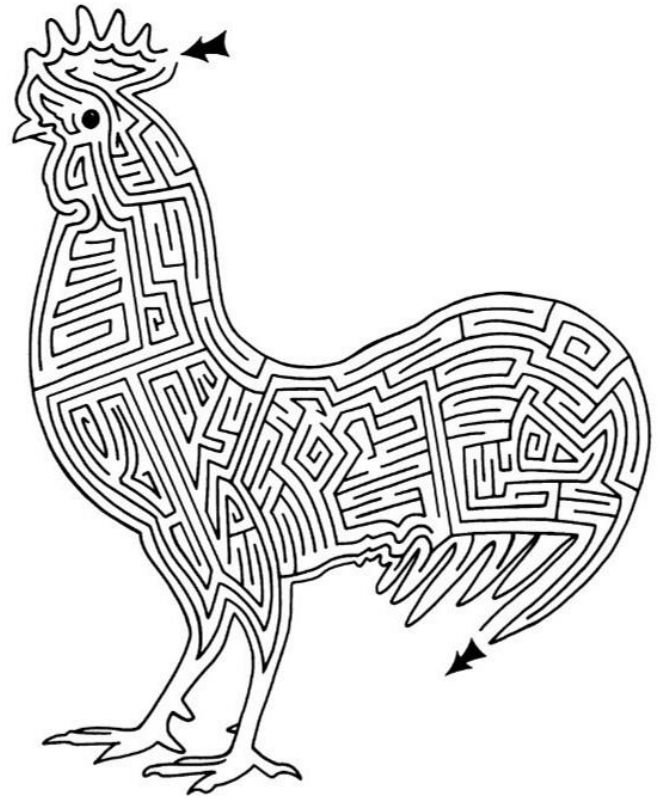


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TV dinners

Although today, eating TV dinners may be looked down on, that certainly wasn't the case back in the 1950s. While most people currently might resort to fast food or other quick meals over TV dinners, back then, they were all the rage.

The term "TV Dinner" was first used as part of a brand of packaged meals developed in 1953 by C.A. Swanson & Sons, with its full name being TV Brand Frozen Dinner. Most TV dinners came in an aluminum tray that was then heated up in the oven. They typically contained some kind of meat, vegetables, potatoes, and a desert.

Why is it called a TV dinner?

The name "TV dinner" was coined by Gerry Thomas, its inventor. At the time it was introduced, televisions were status symbols and a growing medium. Thomas thought the name "TV Dinner" sounded like the product was made for convenience (which it was), and the Swanson executives agreed.

The Swanson & Sons' TV dinner branded frozen meal, sold 5,000 units when it was first introduced in 1953; just one year later, the company had sold over 10,000,000 TV dinners. The company discontinued its successful butter and margarine business to concentrate on a poultry-based line of canned and frozen products. In April 1955, Swanson's 4,000 employees and 20 plants were acquired by the Campbell Soup Company. By 1956, the Swanson brothers were selling 13 million TV dinners annually.

The Swanson TV Dinner branding was eventually discontinued, but the meals live on today under the "Hungry Man" label. And instead of those original aluminum trays, the dinners are made with microwavable plates. Even today, TV Dinners...(That is...) Hungry Man frozen dinners are still a \$9 billion business in America

