

Happy Accidents: Inventions by Mistake

Sometimes, the greatest discoveries happen by accident. Scientists and inventors may be looking for one thing but end up finding something completely unexpected. Here are some famous inventions that were the result of luck, curiosity, and a bit of scientific thinking.

Penicillin (1928)

Scottish scientist *Alexander Fleming* was studying bacteria when he noticed that mold had killed some of his samples. Instead of throwing them away, he investigated further and (1)..... penicillin, the world's first antibiotic. This lucky accident has saved millions of lives.

The Microwave Oven (1945)

While working with radar technology, engineer *Percy Spencer* noticed that a chocolate bar in his pocket had melted near a magnetron. Curious, he experimented with popcorn and eggs, leading to the invention of the microwave oven, which is now found in (2)..... worldwide.

Velcro (1941)

Swiss engineer *George de Mestral* went for a walk and noticed burdock burrs sticking to his clothes and his dog's fur. He studied them under a microscope and saw tiny (3)..... that could attach to fabric. This discovery inspired Velcro, which is now used in fashion, space suits, and medical devices.

Teflon (1938)

Chemist *Roy Plunkett* was working with refrigerants when he accidentally created a non-stick, heat-resistant material. This substance, later called Teflon, became essential for non-stick cookware, space equipment, and (4)..... clothing.

X-Rays (1895)

While experimenting with cathode rays, *Wilhelm Röntgen* noticed that an unknown type of radiation was passing through objects and creating images of bones. He had discovered X-rays, which revolutionized medicine and (5).....

Safety Glass (1903)

Chemist *Édouard Bénédictus* accidentally dropped a glass flask coated with a plastic solution. Instead of shattering, the glass held its shape. This led to the invention of safety glass, now used in car (6)..... and protective gear.

Saccharin (1879)

Scientist *Constantin Fahlberg* forgot to wash his hands after working in the lab and later noticed his dinner tasted unusually sweet. He had unknowingly discovered saccharin, the first artificial (7)....., which became widely used in diet sodas and sugar-free products.

Cornflakes (1894)

While trying to make a healthy food for patients at a sanitarium, *John and Will Kellogg* accidentally left cooked wheat sitting out too long. When they rolled it, it broke into flakes instead of a smooth sheet. They tried the same process with corn, and cornflakes were born, later becoming one of the most popular breakfast cereals.

Potato Chips (1853)

Chef *George Crum* was frustrated when a customer complained that his fries were too thick. In response, he sliced (8)..... paper-thin and fried them until crispy. The customer loved them, and potato chips were born!

Post-it Notes (1968)

Chemist *Spencer Silver* was trying to create a super-strong glue but accidentally made a weak, reusable adhesive. Years later, his colleague *Arthur Fry* used it to keep (9)..... from falling out of his hymnal, leading to the invention of Post-it Notes.

Conclusion

These discoveries show that luck and curiosity often go hand in hand with scientific progress. While (10)..... collection and careful experimentation and are crucial, sometimes a simple mistake or unexpected event can change the world.

Word Bank

sweetener, hooks, bookmarks, lab, windshields, discovered, potatoes, diagnostics, kitchens, waterproof, data