

# Spam

## 1. Spam – the food

The food company Hormel invented “Spam” in 1937. It is a product that requires no refrigeration and lasts for many years in its package (made from tin), called a “can”. It is made from pork shoulder (one of the least desirable cuts) and potato and is called a “luncheon meat” (the word “luncheon” is the original word for “lunch”). It was very popular during World War II as it was extremely convenient to send to the troops who were fighting abroad. An estimated 45 million kilograms of it were sent to military personnel during the war, although reviews of the meat from the troops were not always positive.



However, many people enjoyed the product, and Spam became an integral part of American cuisine during the postwar years. Hormel sold one billion cans of Spam between 1937 and 1959, and until 2024, about eight billion cans have been sold.

According to the Spam Museum (<https://www.spam.com/museum>), the word was originally a contraction of the words "spiced ham". However, there is no “spice” and very little “ham” in Spam! The Spam Museum is an admission-free museum in Austin, Minnesota, dedicated to Spam. The museum tells the history of the Hormel company, the origin of Spam, and its place in world culture.

1970 Monty Python “Spam” sketch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bW4vEo1F4E>  
(Monty Python was a British comedy group)

## 2. Spam – unwanted emails

In the technology of today, the word “spam” represents unsolicited and unwanted emails or messages which often contain adverts or viruses. The origin of the use of the word “spam” to represent unwanted emails is believed to be the 1970 Monty Python “Spam” sketch (link above). In the sketch, most of the restaurant’s menu items contain Spam, and one lady, who doesn’t like Spam, feels that it’s an unwanted item and she finds that it’s difficult to order a plate without it. The repetition and ubiquity of "spam" in the sketch drew parallels with the inundation of unwanted emails in users' inboxes. Over time, as unsolicited emails became more prevalent, the term "spam" was adopted to describe them, highlighting the similarity between the unwanted flood of e-mails and the repetitive chant by the Vikings in the Monty Python sketch.

