

Popcorn For Sale!

The first machine made to produce large enough amounts of popcorn at a time to sell was invented by Charles Cretors in Chicago in 1885, and the business he started still manufactures popcorn machines and other specialty equipment today. Popcorn was first sold as a snack at carnivals at the end of the 19th century, but it has not always been served in movie theatres. In fact, when popcorn vendors first began selling their treat outside of movie theatres, the theatre owners were not happy about it. They thought that eating popcorn would distract their customers from watching the movie. But they couldn't have been more wrong! People loved to munch on popcorn while watching movies, and eventually the theatre owners figured out that they ought to be selling popcorn to their customers themselves, so that they could make more money. Movie theatres finally began selling popcorn in 1912.

Nowadays, popcorn sales produce more revenue for a movie theatre than ticket sales. This is because popcorn has a huge profit margin, meaning that the theatre has to spend very little on popcorn in order to make a very big profit. On average, for every dollar that a customer spends on popcorn, the movie theatre makes ninety cents. An additional benefit is that the salty popcorn makes customers more likely to buy an expensive drink.

1. Where was popcorn first sold?

2. Why didn't theatre owners initially like popcorn?

3. What produces more revenue for movie theatres, ticket sales or popcorn sales?

4. Explain what a "profit margin" is.

