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## Desert ecosystem food chain

Americans spend more money on fast food than movies, music, books, magazines and newspapers combined. The rapid growth of this \$240 billion industry over the past 30 years as a result of economic change has forced many women to work outside their homes. Here are the top nine fast food chains and how they stack up around the world. Go to the next page to see the first fast food chain on our list. Ad content Almost everyone recognizes Jared Fogle as the poster boy for Subway's healthy, low-fat diet. He lost 245 pounds in a year by eating two subway sandwiches a day and walking. Subway was founded in 1965 by 17-year-old college first-year student Fred DeLuca and family friend Dr. Peter Buck. Today there are more than 27,000 restaurants in 85 countries, using more than 150,000 people. With global sales of more than \$9 billion annually, Subway serves nearly 2,800 sandwiches and salads in the United States every 60 seconds. If all the bread made by Metro in a year was put to an end, they would wrap around the world an estimated six times. Originally founded by Dick and Mac McDonald's as a barbecue drive in the 1940s, McDonald's Corporation now boasts annual profits of more than \$2.1 billion. Known for its signature fries, the group trains more new workers annually than the U.S. Army, and estimates one in eight Americans already work for McDonald's. In 1968, McDonald's run about 1,000 restaurants worldwide, but today it has more than 31,000. In 1958, brothers Dan and Frank Carney of Wichita, Kansas, founded Pizza Hut. Based in Dallas, the chain specializes in American-style pizzas along with side dishes such as buffalo wings, bread and garlic bread. Pizza Hut is the world's largest pizza chain, operating more than 12,500 stores in 100 countries and has 140,000 employees. With annual revenue of \$5.3 billion in the United States alone, the company has collected more than its nearest competitors - Domino's and Papa John's - combined. In December 1954, James McLamore and David Edgerton opened the first Insta Burger King in Miami, Florida. The restaurant is based on an assembly line production system inspired by a visit to the McDonald Brothers' hamburger stand. Today, Burger King has more than 11,000 restaurants in 65 countries. With an average annual income of \$11.2 billion, the chain uses more than 340,000 employees and serves 11 million customers every day. The Kentucky Fried Chicken ad was the brain child of Harland Sanders, who opened his first restaurant during the Great Depression at a gas station in Corbin, Kentucky. In the 1930s, Sanders developed his secret recipe of 11 herbs and spices, touted one of the most kept secrets in the world and to this day is locked in a cellar in Louisville. Louisville. Sanders, as he knew, sold his empire for \$2 million in 1964. Today, KFC is a \$10.3 billion brand with more than 11,000 restaurants in 80 countries. The company uses 750,000 people to serve more than a billion delicious chicken finger meals each year. The first Dave Thomas ad opened Wendy -- named for his daughter -- in Columbus, Ohio, in 1969. In 1970, Thomas introduced drive-thru windows to his customers, an innovation that allowed them to buy food without leaving their cars. The chain's passion for customer service and quality products has remained unchanged throughout the years. Today, with an annual income of \$3.7 billion, Wendy's has more than 9,900 restaurants and 58,000 employees. Advertising brothers Tom and James Monaghan started their first Domino's Pizza in 1960 in Ypsilanti, Michigan, when they bought a pizzeria called DomiNick's for \$500. A year later, Tom becomes the sole owner of the restaurant when James exchanges his business for a Volkswagen Beetle. Tom renamed Domino's Pizza and quickly became one of the world's leading pizza chains with over 8,000 stores in 50 countries. Serving more than a million customers every day, Domino's uses more than 140,000 employees and delivers an annual income of \$1.4 billion. The Glen Bell Ad opened its first Taco Bell in Downey, California, in 1962. In 1964, the first franchise was granted, and in 1969, Taco Bell went public on the stock exchange. Every year since 2001, the company's sales have increased 6 percent, and today, total revenue is more than \$18 billion. Taco Bell maintains more than 6,000 restaurants worldwide, using 143,000 workers. The ad was founded in Ohio in 1964 by Forest and Leroy Raffel, arby's name is a play on R.B., short for Raffel Brothers and also for roast beef, the restaurant's specialty. Always ahead of its time, in 1991 Arby became the first fast food chain to introduce a light menu, adding three sandwiches and four salads, all under 300 calories and 94 per cent fat free. In 1994, the chain banned smoking in all its restaurants. Arby's currently uses more than 82,000 employees in 3,500 stores worldwide and brings in \$1.8 billion annually. CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Helen Davies, Marjorie Dorfman, Mary Fons, Deborah Hawkins, Martin Hintz, Linnea Lundgren, David Priess, Julia Clark Robinson, Paul Seaburn, Heidi Stevens, and Steve Theunissen advertise desert food often coupled with food insecurity. Food insecurity means people are unsure where their food will come from. In addition, they have little or no access to nutritious food and are likely to have an unbalanced diet and skip meals. There are nearly 1 billion food insecure people in countries with lowest income [source: USDA]. In 2006 alone, 35.5 million people in the United States in food insecure homes -- especially at risk are those living below the poverty line, Hispanics, African-Americans, households with children, and those headed by single women [source: USDA and Food Research and Action Center]. How did it get this way? Economic. Fifty years ago, small parent neighborhoods and pop markets were popular in urban neighborhoods and small towns. But today, such markets make up only 17 percent of the grocery landscape in the United States [source: Hirsch]. Shop owners want to turn a profit and go where they can serve the most people while meeting their own financial goals. But store owners are just part of the picture -- store size is also a factor. People like a bargain, and although supermarket-oriented bargains can seem hard to escape, they are often too big for rural communities, but don't fit easily in tightly packed urban neighborhoods. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that grocery stores sold in the food desert cost an average of 10 percent more than grocery stores sold in suburban markets, meaning people in low-income communities are affected by food insecurity may have to pay more for their food [source: Hirsch]. While authentic grocery stores with a wide range of affordable food may be lacking or far away, many communities in the food desert actually have access to food. Just the buffet includes a selection of unhealthy processed foods - known as fringe foods - from fast food restaurants, small corner convenience stores and liquor stores. Compare the distance between the nearest fast food restaurant and the nearest grocery store - this is the food balance factor. When a fast food restaurant is closer to your home than a grocery store, things are unbalanced. The convenience store at the corner gas station is not so convenient if you want to include fruits and vegetables in your diet. Fries may be delicious but they have never been part of the USDA's food pyramid. Living on fringe food is bad for your wallet and it is also bad for your health. Obesity is associated with uns nutritious food, and it's a drain not only on the body but on the healthcare industry, employers and governments. The estimated cost to the U.S. health care system due to obesity and obesity-related problems is \$100 billion a year [source: Gallagher]. Diet-related health problems are disproportionately higher in the food desert than areas served by genuine groceries. You are what you eat, as the saying goes, and poor quality food is also linked chronic diseases, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension and even premature death. When nutritious food is not available, it is difficult to eat healthy. No one has the answer to how to get food to areas that are not served but advocacy groups are working on it. An innovative solution is a new mobile pant panter program Yeah, a market in a truck -- bringing healthy food directly to people. Residents in rural food deserts are benefiting from online farming support communities (CSAs) where they order products from local farmers. And when all else fails, do it yourself: Gardening is growing in some cities, at home and in shared urban community plots. Related HowStuffWorks Article End Hunger NetworkFeeding AmericaHealthy Corner Store NetworkAchenbaum, Emily. Roseland wants more groceries in the 'food desert'. Chicago Tribune. 2008. 0,1864985.storyEisinger, Peter K. Toward an End to Hunger in America: Hunger and Food Assistance Policy in the United States. 1998.Center for Food Research and Action. Hunger in America. Mari. Brother, can you spare an apple? The Huffington Post. 2008. C. Clare and Thomas A. Lyson. 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