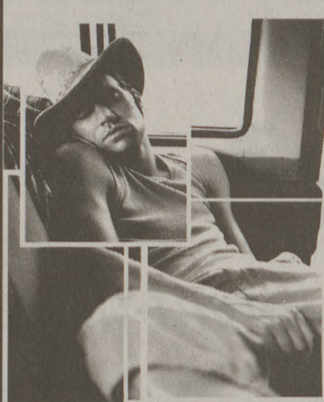


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Thursday, March 25, 2004

To Southern California's In-N-Out devotees, bunless burgers are old hat

By Daisy Nguyen
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — As one fast-food behemoth after another jumps on the bunless burger bandwagon, devotees of a small Southern California-based chain of drive-through eateries are taking some pride in saying, "We told you so."

Patrons of In-N-Out Burger have been ordering high-protein, low-carbohydrate hamburgers wrapped in lettuce for more than 30 years.

"In fact, it was customers who gave it the name 'protein style,'" said Carl Van Fleet, the company's vice president of planning.

They also created it, in a sense, when they began requesting it in the early 1970s,

Van Fleet said. And although you won't find the protein-style burger listed on any of the white, billboard-like menu signs at In-N-Out's 181 restaurants in California, Nevada and Arizona, all you have to do is ask.

Arnold Schwarzenegger did last year during a campaign stop at a central California In-N-Out Burger, and got it done his way.

The protein-style burger is part of the "secret menu" that has developed over the years as the privately held chain of restaurants has strived to accommodate its customers' fondness for customized food.

(Another entry on the secret menu is the "animal-style" burger, a beef patty cooked in mustard with grilled onions, pickles and an extra helping of a secret "special sauce.")

It is the protein-style that's getting attention these days, however, as the big rush to roll out lettuce-wrapped burgers of fast-food consumers. Late last Friday's all began selling them.

At In-N-Out, Van Fleet says, sales of the burger have increased steadily in years, without a lick of advertising.

The fat content doesn't seem to be a concern for Deane Wong and her husband, Lorne, recently stopped at an In-N-Out near Los Angeles International Airport to indulge in hamburgers and fries.

"It's not healthy, but we like the taste," she said. "We rarely eat fast food, but we need your burger fix now and then."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Entire nations lose mental capacity to nutrient shortages, the U.N. warns

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The brainpower of entire nations is diminished because of a shortage of the right vitamins, and scientists warn that the only solution, a new survey says.

To fight the problem, the United Nations is prescribing a pantry of artificially fortified soy sauce laced with zinc, "salt" spiked with iron, cooking fortified with vitamin A.

Deficiencies in these vitamins are having alarming effects in developing countries, even where people generally have enough to eat, said the report released Wednesday.

A lack of iron lowers children's IQs by an average five to 10 points, the report said. A deficiency in iodine cuts it 13 more points, said Venkatesh Mannar, president of the Micronutrient Initiative, which produced the report along with the United Nations Children's Fund. Birth defects increase if mothers don't get enough folic acid, and a shortage of vitamin makes children 25-30 percent more likely to die of disease.

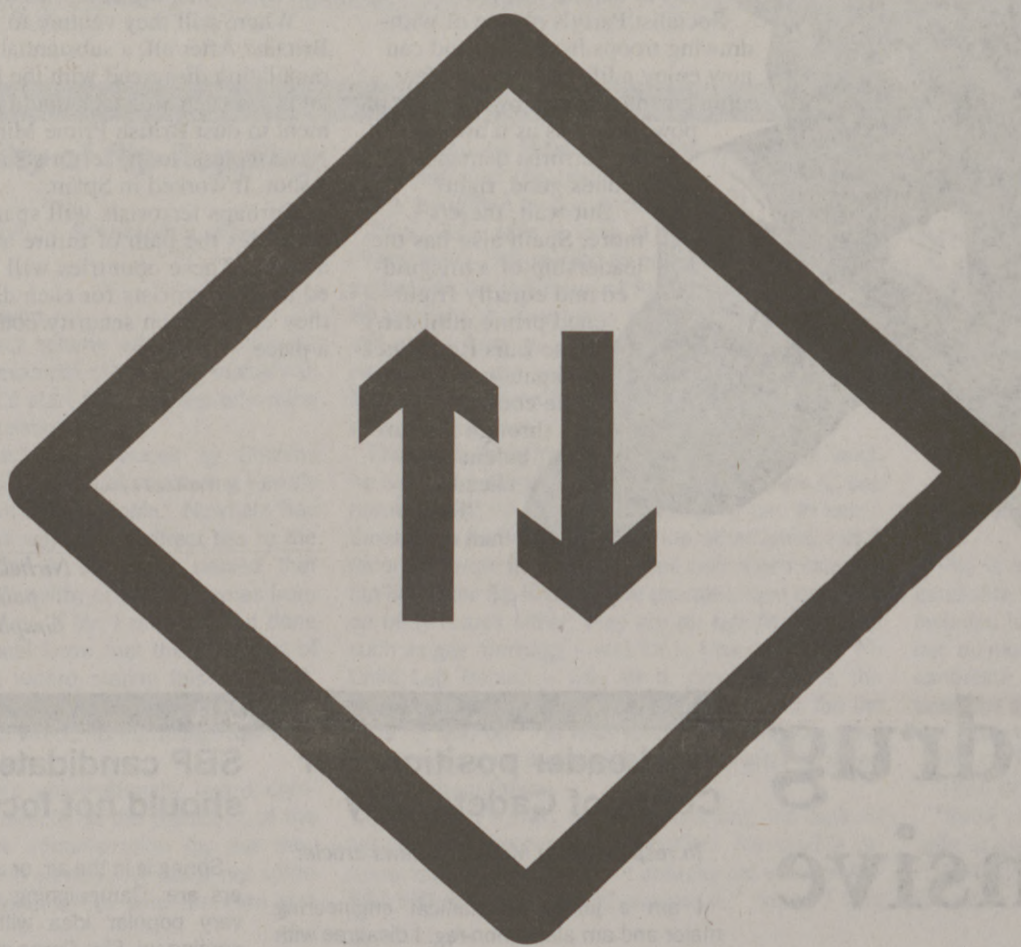
Researchers say they may have found gene mutation separating man from ape

Touching off a scientific feud, researchers say they may have uncovered the mutation that caused the earliest humans to branch from their apelike ancestors — a gene that led to smaller, weaker jaws and, ultimately, bigger brains.

Smaller jaws would have fundamentally changed the structure of the skull, they contend, eliminating thick muscles that worked like bungee cords to anchor a huge jaw to the rest of the head. The change would have allowed the cranium to grow larger and led to the development of a bigger brain capable of tool-making and language.

The mutation is reported in the latest issue of the journal *Nature* not by anthropologists, but by a team of biologists and paleontologists at the University of Pennsylvania and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

The report provoked strong reactions throughout the contested field of human evolution, with one scientist declaring "counter to the fundamental evolution" and another announcing it "super."



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