

Sporks - The Utensils of the 20th Century

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Sporks - The Utensils of the 20th Century

Over the past century, fast food restaurants have been booming. Chains of restaurants such as McDonald's, Wendy's, Rally's, Taco Bell, and Burger King have revolutionized society with fast, inexpensive, tasty foods that can be ordered across the country. With these new eateries, plastic utensils have also gained popularity. The drive-up window makes metal utensils obsolete. Customers would drive away with millions of dollars in silverware each year nationwide. Plastic provides cheap, acceptably durable alternatives to the traditional metal forks, spoons, and knives.

The plastic utensil revolution also featured a new implement in the arsenal of cutlery: the spork. A cross between a spoon and a [fork](#), the spork has been the utensil of choice for years at Taco Bell, KFC, Rally's, Popeye's, and other restaurants and cafeterias nationwide. Its appeal extends not only from its unique [versatility](#) in the transfer of rations from plate to mouth, but also in its value as a plaything, a decorative item, and (to some misguided individuals) an item of inspirational worship.

According to a highly questionable rumor, the spork was invented in the 1940's by the

United [States army](#) after conquering Japan. General MacArthur declared that eating with chopsticks was uncivilized, and the Japanese should eat with forks and spoons like the rest of the "civilized" world. However, there was some hesitation in the military about "arming" the civilians of the newly conquered land with forks, and so the spork was invented (ag592@yfn.edu). Despite this, the official patent on the name and concept of the "spork" is currently held by Van Brode Milling Co., Inc (shmit@spork.org).

Whatever their origin may be, ...

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...irration to people around the country to have established a cult following. Surprisingly, no metal utensil companies have taken note of the spork's versatility and have sold them as a regular part of their utensil sets. The market for such an item would indeed seem large, based on the large, established following of the spork. Such a change could revolutionize the table setting routines of the world, eliminating the need for multiple utensils and lowering post-dinner dish washing requirements. Only time will tell if such ingenuity will be implemented in the utensil manufacturing industry.

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