

Women's History

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Three Wise Women

Sometime this holiday, raise a glass in celebration of women who paid their toll that we might fly. In the 1940's, socialite Margarita Sames served a drink made with tequila, fresh lime juice and Cointreau to guests in her Acapulco home. They called it the margarita. Indigenous Mexicans long have known the medicinal value of tequila. Abuelas splash it on grandchildren's cuts and bruises. A tequila massage is said to increase relaxation while also detoxifying the skin. As the analgesic qualities of tequila soak into the skin and tissues, its aroma helps you relax.

Ruth Wakefield's restaurant in a converted Toll House Inn was once a rest stop for horses to grab some hay or oats on journeys from Boston to New Bedford. As co-owner, manager, hostess, and cook, Ruth kept very busy. One hurried day in 1930, without time to melt chocolate and pour it into the batter, she simply broke the chocolate into chunks and tossed them into the mix thinking they would melt. After baking, she stared at her pan of "ruined" cookies speckled with chunks of chocolate...but ruined only until they were tasted. A sudden jump in sales of chocolate bars in the eastern region caused Nestlé to investigate this lady. They bought the rights to her recipe, which is printed on the back of each chocolate chip package. Many cooks are creative with variations of chocolate chip cookies, some even add "oats."

Kevlar, a material once a mere fiction in Superman's suit, is now a fact. As a research chemist for DuPont, Stephanie Kwolek developed a crystalline solution she wanted spun into fiber. But a technician refused to spin it, stating the solid particles in the material would clog the tiny holes of the spinneret. Stephanie knew solid material was not in her solution and over the course of weeks, persuaded the technician to spin it. The results were astonishing. In 1971, she had invented a remarkable technology and a fiber that would forever change the field of polymer chemistry and make many millions of dollars for DuPont. This amazing material improves the performance of snow skis., and is found also in boats, bullet-resistant vests, athletic shoes, boots, airplanes, et al. It is strong yet can shave 800 pounds off an aircraft frame. NASA used a 12-mile Kevlar cable (thinner than a pencil) to secure a 1,200-pound satellite during a space shuttle mission. It can be used whenever and wherever a very strong, stiff, lightweight fiber is needed. Any ideas?

Happy Holidays!

References

Girls Think of Everything by Catherine Thimmesh

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