

International Love

**By Reg P. Wydeven
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A year-and-a-half ago, our family went to Disney World to celebrate my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. In addition to the Magic Kingdom, we also visited Animal Kingdom, Star Wars weekend at Hollywood Studios and Epcot.

Our kids loved Epcot, especially the World Showcase. It was fascinating to learn about different countries and different cultures. And the food was fantastic. We could enjoy delicacies from all over the world: English muffins, French toast, Belgian waffles, Canadian bacon, French fries, Swiss cheese, Italian Sausage, Polish Sausage, Spanish rice, German potato salad, and Swedish meatballs. It's amazing how many foods are named after countries.

One such dish, however, started an international incident.

Fage, the maker of Greek yogurt, sued rival Greek yogurt manufacturer Chobani in Britain. Fage, based in Greece, claimed that Chobani, based in America, was misleading British consumers by labeling its product as "Greek yogurt," when it was, in fact, made in the U.S.

Sales of Greek yogurt have skyrocketed over the last few years because of its health advantages over traditional yogurt. Greek yogurt is thicker and creamier because the whey is extensively strained. According to U.S. News & World Report, Greek yogurt also has twice as much protein, half as much sugar and the same amount of calories as regular yogurt.

In the trial, Fage argued that in order to be identified as "Greek," yogurt must be made in Greece. The trial court agreed, and granted an injunction that prevented Chobani from using the "Greek yogurt" label in Britain. Upset, Chobani appealed the decision, arguing that Greek yogurt is named for the process in which it is manufactured, not where it is manufactured. The British Court of Appeal disagreed, however, and upheld the decision to prevent Chobani from calling its yogurt "Greek."

Going forward, Chobani will presumably have to label its product "Greek-style" when marketing in the United Kingdom. But the British court's decision was recently overshadowed by another international conflict.

As a sponsor of Team U.S.A., Chobani donated 5,000 cups of yogurt to our Olympic athletes competing in Sochi. Russian officials, however, banned the treat from being imported, claiming it lacked the proper customs certification.

President Obama, along with numerous other politicians, pleaded with the Russians to allow the yogurt to enter the country. We ultimately lost the cultural Cold Treat War over cultures, as Russia would not back down. Instead, Chobani donated the yogurt, which was being held in refrigerated storage near Newark Liberty International Airport, to New York and New Jersey food banks.

So Chobani is banned in Great Britain from calling its yogurt "Greek" and it can't send any yogurt to our athletes in Sochi competing in the Olympics, which ironically began in Greece.

I never would have guessed there could be so much strife over yogurt. I don't know – I guess it's all Greek to me.

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