

# Why Oreos might as well exist in their own cookie stratosphere

By Roberto A. Ferdman, Washington Post on 07.22.15

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Oreo Thins are the latest twist on the world's best selling cookie. Wikimedia Commons

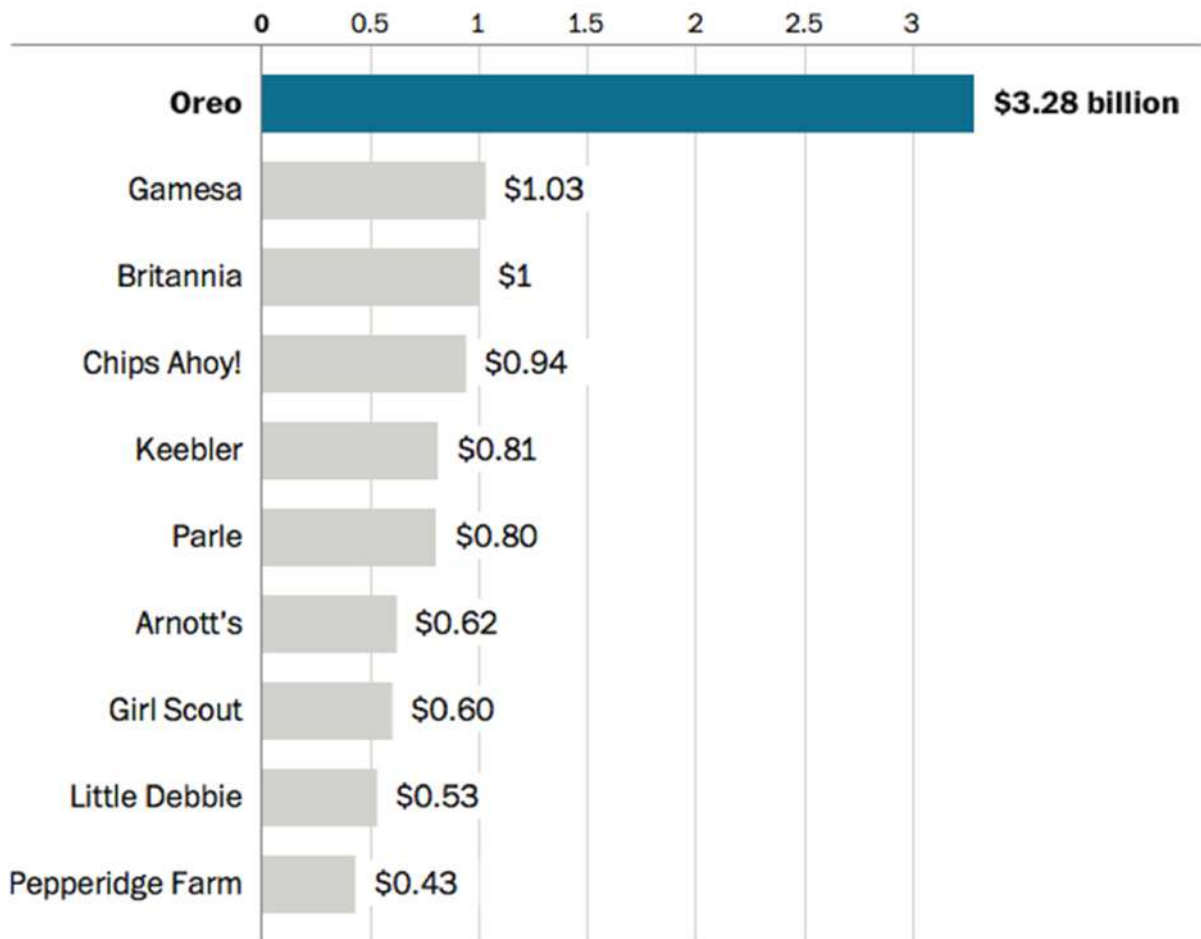
Mondelez International just introduced the latest twist on the Oreo, the best selling cookie in the world. Oreo Thins are similar to the original wafers, except that they are, well, slimmer. The new cookies are each about 4 millimeters thinner and 7 calories lighter.

But despite their meager size, the new, slimmed down Oreos are actually faced with a pretty tall task: to extend the unparalleled—and seemingly endless—rise of what is, without question, the most widely eaten cookie in history.

Here in the United States, Oreos might as well exist in their own cookie stratosphere. Today, nearly one out of every five dollars spent on cookies is spent on an Oreo. The creme-filled wafers' nearest competitor is Keebler (of which there are 11 varieties, including Chips Deluxe and Fudge Shoppe). But last year Americans spent only about half as many dollars on Keebler cookies as they did on Oreos.

## Oreo's global cookie domination

Worldwide sales, 2014.



Source: Euromonitor

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And the distance between the best-selling cookie and everything else is only growing. Since 2005, Oreo sales have grown more than 60 percent, which is easily the largest increase among any of the top cookie brands sold in the United States. For context, consider that cookie sales marketwide rose only 10 percent over that period, or that more than 70 percent of that growth is directly attributable to increased demand for Oreos.

Oreos are dominant globally, too. The brand, which accounts for roughly 5 percent of worldwide cookie sales, has more than three times the foothold of any other cookie.

There are many reasons for Oreo's dominance. Perhaps most importantly, people really like them. The clearest indication of their appeal is how widely Oreos are used to enhance other foods. The cookie, after all, is gobbled up not only bare or dipped in milk, but fried in dough, mixed with ice cream, blended into milk shakes, pounded into pie crust, and crushed and sprinkled over a lot of sweets.

There is also an element of reliability. After so many years of exposure to both the brand, which has been around since it was introduced by Nabisco in 1912, and the cookie's unique design, people are drawn to Oreos because no other cookie, no matter how similar, can replace the familiarity they offer. On the cookie's 75th birthday, in 1986, The New York Times wrote that "(Oreo) cookies are designed as consciously as buildings, and sometimes better."

But Oreos have managed to grow by breaking with tradition, too. Over the years, the brand has reinvigorated interest by introducing new, often outlandish variations on the original formula. Some of them, like Golden Oreos, which are made with vanilla wafers, have proved to be popular, and endured. Others, like Watermelon Oreos, have not. All of the permutations, however, have likely helped build interest in the brand at large, whether by introducing a new attractive cookie or reminding Oreo aficionados that it has been too long since they last bought a pack of the originals.

Oreo Thins, the newest addition to the lineup, will be available in the United States beginning next week, after a successful run in China, where they were introduced last year. The plan is to eventually roll them out worldwide. They are being pitched as a more "sophisticated" cookie. They are meant to be eaten on their own, in their entirety, rather than after being split into their two components—chocolate wafer and creme—as the original ones so often are.

**Quiz**

- 1 Each of the following is a main idea of the article EXCEPT:
- (A) Oreo is the most popular cookie in the world.
  - (B) Oreo has announced a new product, Oreo Thins.
  - (C) Oreos are growing more popular in China every year.
  - (D) Oreo has made a variety of similar cookies over the years.
- 2 If the last two paragraphs of the article had a title, which of the following would make a good choice?
- (A) "Oreo Aficionados"
  - (B) "Most Popular Cookie"
  - (C) "Sophisticated Cookies"
  - (D) "Breaking With Tradition"
- 3 Why is the chart "Oreo's global cookie domination" included with the article?
- (A) to identify the number of Oreos sold every year
  - (B) to identify which competitors are closest to Oreo
  - (C) to show that Oreo's popularity continues to grow
  - (D) to show how much bigger Oreo is than its competitors
- 4 Which statement from the article is BEST supported by the chart "Oreo's global cookie domination"?
- (A) Here in the United States, Oreos might as well exist in their own cookie stratosphere.
  - (B) But last year Americans spent only about half as many dollars on Keebler cookies as they did on Oreos.
  - (C) For context, consider that cookie sales marketwide rose only 10 percent over that period, or that more than 70 percent of that growth is directly attributable to increased demand for Oreos.
  - (D) That might not sound like much, but Oreo's slice of the pie is more than three times the size of any other cookie brand's global sales.