



*“Why, Birdseye would have wondered, would you want to be limited by local produce when the food of the world is available?”*

# Birdseye

The Adventures of a Curious Man  
MARK KURLANSKY

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**How did those peas and carrots get in your freezer?** The story of how Clarence Birdseye developed the first freezing process is just as odd and interesting as the man himself. **Birdseye** is the first biography of Clarence Birdseye, the eccentric genius inventor whose fast-freezing process revolutionised the food industry and American agriculture.

While working as a fur trapper in Labrador, Canada, Clarence Birdseye encountered an age-old problem: bad food and an unappealing, unhealthy diet. However, he observed that fresh vegetables wetted and left outside in the Arctic winds froze in a way that maintained their integrity after thawing. As a result, he developed his patented Birdseye freezing process and started the company that still bears his name.

*“Birdseye loved food, loved to cook, and wrote, thought, and talked about eating more than most people. He was what would be called today a foodie. But he was a nineteenth-century foodie, a foodie in reverse who ate wild local food and artisinally made products, the food of family farms, but who dreamed of making food industrial [...] The real argument is whether in changing our eating habits, Birdseye made life better.”*

Birdseye, the last of the DIY, all-American tinkerers, forever changed the way we preserve, store, and distribute food, and the way we eat. Mark Kurlansky's vibrant and affectionate narrative reveals Clarence Birdseye as a quintessential “can-do” American inventor.

In addition to changing the food industry and our diets more than any single man in history, at the time of his death he had 250 other patents including an electric sunlamp, a harpoon gun to tag finback whales, and an improved incandescent lightbulb. He shows how the greatest of changes can come from the simplest of ideas and the unlikeliest of places.

**Mark Kurlansky** is the New York Times bestselling author of many books, including *The Food of a Younger Land*, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World*, *Salt: A World History*, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*, and *The Big Oyster: History on the Half Shell*. He lives in New York City.

**“Less a biography than a glimpse into an exuberantly inventive time in America... In Kurlansky's hands, the arc of Birdseye's life... is a history of the American imagination”**

*The Washington Post*



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