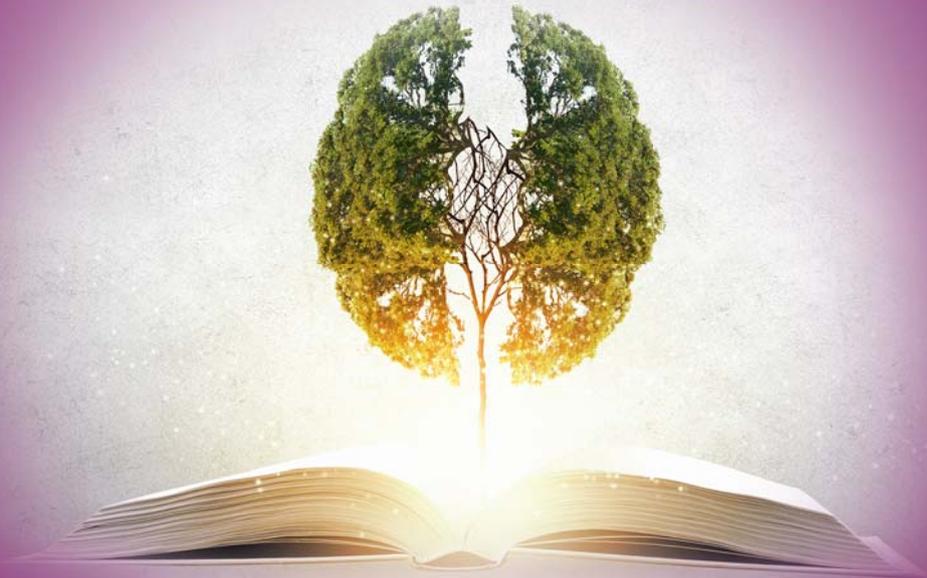


# 853

**Hard To Believe**

# FACTS

**Better Explained, Counterintuitive and Fun Trivia  
from the Creator of RaiseYourBrain.com**



**NAYDEN KOSTOV**

**853 HARD TO BELIEVE FACTS**

**By Nayden Kostov**

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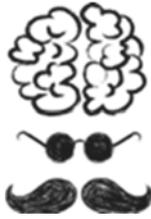
## PROLOGUE

This book is full of fun and verified facts, presented in an accessible manner that I hope will provide you with hours of entertainment. My objective has been to provide you with a lifetime supply of icebreakers and points of discussion. Amaze your friends and family by telling them that pistachios can combust spontaneously or that the holes in pen caps are there to save people from choking to death!

Following the success of my site [RaiseYourBrain](#), I decided to collect the best trivia gems and present you with a fact compendium suitable for a wide audience. This is the product of years of sifting through history and references books on a myriad of subjects as well as searching the Internet and paying attention to the news. In 2016, I published “1123 Hard to Believe Facts”, which was read by tens of thousands and accumulated hundreds of 5-star reviews on Amazon and GoodReads. As it has remained in the Top 10 of its category for almost two years now, I decided that another instalment was merited, this time with more illustrations and detailed explanations.

This book is suitable for most audiences across the age spectrum. The “spiciest” entries are neatly separated in the chapter “Facts about human and animal sexuality”. They remain factual and abstain from profanity. To my greatest delight, an avid reader of my website explained that he was preparing daily fact sheets for his son’s lunch box. He prints out three facts every day to create some lunchtime fun for his child in the hope of sparking intellectual curiosity. I honestly wish my parents had done the same for me when I was a lad!

## CHAPTER I



### UNBELIEVABLE FACTS ABOUT VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING

1. It is technically possible to be born more than once. A baby was “born” twice in Texas, USA, in 2016 after she was taken out of her mother’s uterus for twenty minutes in order for the surgeons to perform life-saving surgery.
2. Table tennis (aka ping-pong) was prohibited in the Soviet Union for quite some time (1930 - 1950) as it was thought to damage eyesight.
3. The book “Everything men know about women” has 120 blank pages. It has sold over a million copies so far.
4. Celluloid billiard balls can literally explode on impact.
5. During the 1948 US Presidential Election, everyone was so sure Thomas Dewey would be elected the next US President that the Chicago Daily Tribune put a “Dewey Defeats Truman” front-pager before the final results were announced. Truman eventually won and proudly posed with the newspaper.



6. A woman from Perth, Australia, is able to smell Parkinson’s disease before patients show any symptoms.

7. Native tribes in Central America invented wheeled toys thousands of years ago. By the time America was colonised, however, they had not yet found a practical use for the wheel.



8. Trees in the rainforest grow year-round and therefore have no rings.
9. The billionaire and founder of Alibaba Corporation, Jack Ma, is worth almost USD 40 billion (2017 data). Before finding success as an entrepreneur, he unsuccessfully applied ten times to Harvard University, and even was once turned down for a job at Kentucky Fried Chicken.



10. Ants have the highest brain to body size ratio of any animal.
11. A bird's beak grows constantly, just like human nails. Natural wear and tear however keeps the beak's size more or less constant.
12. In 1908, the Russian Olympic team arrived in London, UK, 12 days late because they were still using the Julian calendar. The Russian Orthodox Church still follows it, which is why Christmas in Russia falls on 7 January rather than on 25 December.

13. In many countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, etc.) men never give an even number of flowers to a lady. Even numbers bouquets are reserved for funerals.
14. The congested traffic in Moscow, Russia, has led some wealthy Russians to hire fake ambulances to beat the jams.
15. Across the majority of the Western nations, the higher the average wedding costs, the higher the probability of divorce.
16. The closest distance between Russia and the United States of America is only 4 km (2.5 mi), between the islands Little Diomedede (USA) and Big Diomedede (Russia).



17. Most Dutch people believe that reheating spinach is very dangerous and can lead to poisoning although there is little scientific evidence supporting this.
18. The video game Tetris was first released in the Soviet Union in 1984. It appeared in the West a year later.
19. Jupiter is the fastest rotating planet in the Solar System.
20. In 1989, the USSR gave Pepsico 17 submarines, a cruiser, a frigate, and a destroyer in exchange for Pepsi products.
21. In Japan, ladies cover their mouths when laughing because it is considered rude to show one's teeth.
22. The Hague is the third biggest inhabited locality in the Netherlands with its 510,000 citizens. Administratively speaking however, it has never received an official city status and is therefore dubbed "the largest village in Europe".
23. Julius Wagner-Jauregg received a Nobel Prize in 1927 for his discovery that if one had syphilis and then contracted malaria, the high fever would cure the syphilis.

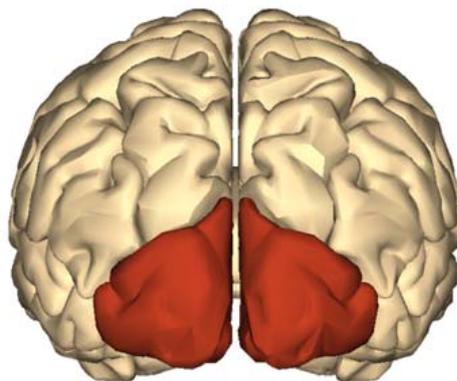
24. Initially, battle tanks were categorised into “male” and “female” tanks based on their main armament. Male tanks were equipped with cannons, while females had heavy machine guns.
25. During WWI, France built a “fake Paris” near the real city in order to confuse German pilots.
26. Adolf Hitler objected to the use of poison gas on the battlefield in WWII partly because he had been gassed as a soldier during WWI.
27. As a young soldier, Hitler used to have a normal-sized moustache, but he was ordered to trim it down in order to better accommodate a gas mask.
28. Nutella was invented during WWII because there was a shortage of chocolate. As its name suggests, it contains more hazelnuts than cocoa. As an aside, the producing company Ferrero uses 25% of the global supply of hazelnuts.
29. Japanese eat Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) for Christmas. It all started in 1974 when KFC Japan successfully promoted fried chicken as a Christmas meal.
30. The founder of KFC, Colonel Sanders, practiced law without a law degree and delivered babies without a medical degree.
31. Because they contain “hidden non-edible pieces”, Kinder Surprise chocolate eggs are outlawed in the USA in their original form.



32. The South Korean automotive brand Hyundai carried out a public crash test to prove that their cars are equally safe regardless of the country they are produced in.
33. Bulgaria had more military airplanes than the USA until 1912. Its air force was the first to drop bombs from an airplane.
34. The word “democracy” is not found in the Constitution of the USA nor is it present in the Declaration of Independence.
35. Birmingham, United Kingdom, is often referred to as the city of 1,000 inventions. About 70% of all inventions copyrighted in the UK came from within a 50-km (35-mi) radius of the city.
36. The first hybrid car was built one century earlier than you probably think. A first design under the name “System Lohner-Porsche” was patented in 1898.
37. Belize is the only English-speaking country in Central America.

38. Okay, OK, refers to an actual town in Oklahoma, USA.
39. Peanuts used to be a key ingredient in dynamite.
40. White candy cotton is 100% sugar.
41. 100,000 tons of chewing gum are produced each year.
42. Saint Joseph of Cupertino is the patron saint of astronauts.
43. Mount Everest (in the Himalayas) was formed millions of years after the Tyrannosaurus rex became extinct.
44. In 2008, a Canadian man replaced his fake eye with a bionic camera.
45. Panophobia means “fear of everything”.
46. Oceans cover 70% of Earth’s surface. Yet, rather counterintuitively, lightning is more likely to strike land surface than water.
47. In a freezer, a cup of hot water without a lid sometimes freezes faster than an identical cup of cold water. This is referred to as the Mpemba effect, named after Erasto Mpemba, a 13-year old Tanzanian student who discovered it while making ice cream.
48. New Zealand’s capital, Wellington, is the world’s southernmost.
49. Taste tester of pet food is an actual job.
50. Ostriches need to raise their head in order to swallow when eating and drinking.
51. Ostriches have the smallest eggs relative to size in the animal kingdom. Although being the largest single cell in nature, an ostrich egg is less than 1.5% of the mother’s weight.
52. Young ostriches grow at a rate of 1 cm (half an inch) per day.
53. Twelve publishing houses rejected J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter before it got published. William Golding’s “Lord of the Flies” was rejected twenty times.
54. Out of superstition, the Japanese avoid whistling or cutting their nails after dark. Whistling was historically associated with burglars signalling to each other at night, while cutting your nails is thought to “summon evil spirits”.
55. In Japan, many people hide their thumbs from hearses (funeral vehicles) and when passing close to a graveyard. They say that “your parents will die young if you do not hide your thumbs”. This is linked to the fact that the Japanese word for “thumb” translates into “parent finger”.
56. In Japan, you should never place your chopsticks upright in your rice as such action is part of a funeral ceremony.
57. Etorphine is 3,000 times stronger than morphine. Less than 15 mg of it is enough to immobilise an African elephant.
58. Walt Disney was the first to use the marketing approach called “synergy”.

59. The Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci became the first athlete ever to receive the maximal 10.00 score at the Olympic Games in Montreal, Canada, in 1976.
60. Scuba divers cannot fart at depths of more than 10 m (33 ft).
61. When observed from an airplane, rainbows sometimes look like a discus and not like an arch.
62. In the Greek language, “symposium” roughly means “drinking together”.
63. Pheasants are the birds with the longest feathers.
64. The first Barbie doll was sold in 1959.
65. Barbie doll’s full name is Barbara Millicent “Barbie” Roberts.
66. Milunka Savic is a Serbian war hero. She took the place of her brother as the army mobilised and fought in the Balkan Wars and WWI. By the time her real gender was discovered, she had already been decorated and promoted to corporal.
67. Theophilus Van Kannel patented the world’s first revolving door in 1888. He had a phobia of opening doors for others, especially for women.
68. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most consumed type of red wine worldwide.
69. The earliest copy of the masterpiece Mona Lisa was painted by one of Leonardo da Vinci’s students. It is presently kept in the Prado Museum in Madrid, Spain.
70. Norwegians use the word “Texas” as a synonym for “crazy”.
71. When Marco Polo first saw rhinos, he thought they were unicorns.
72. The zone that controls the eyes, the occipital lobe, covers almost one quarter of the entire human brain.



73. China has grown more maize (corn) than rice since 2011.

74. On any given day, women lose almost twice as many hairs as men.
75. Genetically modified salmon has already been approved for sale by the US Food and Drug Administration.
76. Since 2016 and as of writing, one salmon fish costs more than a barrel of oil.
77. In 2015, top Chinese actress and model Angelababy had her face examined to prove she had not undergone plastic surgery.



78. After the Fukushima earthquake, the islands of Japan moved sideways by 2.5 m (8 ft) and the Earth tilted by 18 cm (7 in).
79. The budget of the movie “Titanic” (1997) was in fact larger than the cost of building the actual ship.
80. The metric system was introduced in 1875. Today, only three countries have not yet officially adopted it: the USA, Liberia and Myanmar.
81. The US Congress’s Metric Conversion Act, passed in 1975, declared that “the metric system is the preferred system of weights and measures for US trade and commerce” and established the United States Metric Board. President Ronald Reagan however abolished the Metric Board in 1982, ensuring continued use of imperial measurements in the USA.
82. Photoshop prevents you from working on full-size pictures of real banknotes.
83. There are insects named after Robert Redford, Che Guevara, Darth Vader, Kate Winslet, Liv Tyler, Adolf Hitler, and Arnold Schwarzenegger.
84. An 85-year-old Austrian woman singlehandedly shredded almost one million euro in banknotes. She wanted to annoy her relatives one more time before dying.
85. Catholics were barred from becoming teachers, doctors or nurses in Sweden until 1951.

**X X X**

I hope you have enjoyed this sample. The book is already available on all Amazon marketplaces worldwide.

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