29 Weird Museums - mental_floss on YouTube (Ep.210)

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Hi, I'm John Green. Welcome to my salon. This is Mental Floss on YouTube.

(0:04) Did you know that Kansas has a barbed wire museum with 2,400 different examples of barbed wire? There is an actual Antique Barbed Wire Society that runs it, and apparently the museum is a real hotspot for barbed wire collectors. It's like their Tinder. Anyway, that's the first of many weird museums I'm going to tell you about today in this video brought by Geico.

(Intro)

(0:31) If you like meat puns (and frankly who doesn't), look no further than the Spam Museum in Austin, Minnesota. It's also affectionately referred to as the GuggenHAM, the PORKopolis, and the MOMA, or the Museum of Meat-Themed Awesomeness.

(0:45) Wait a second, did someone just say GuggenHAM and PORKopolis? That means I get to put two quarters in the Staff Porkchop Party Fund.

(0:52) Anyway, at the Spam Museum, you can learn about the history of Spam, test your knowledge of Spam with some trivia. But really, Mark, who are the real winners, those who know a lot of Spam trivia, or those who don't?

(1:02) Speaking of the MOMA, the MOBA or the Museum of Bad Art, is located in Somerville, Massachusetts. It's pretty much exactly what it sounds like, a collection of really bad art. As the museum is basically located in a basement, they have a few galleries around town, including one by the men's restroom at a local movie theater.

(1:20) The National Museum of Funeral History can be found in Houston, Texas. It has the biggest collection of funeral artifacts in the United States, because, you know, where else are you going to find a full-scale recreation of Abraham Lincoln in his coffin?

(1:31) There is a museum of PEZ memorabilia in Burlingame, California. It contains every PEZ dispenser ever, 900 in total, including those much sought-after "Ice Age 2" PEZ dispensers.

(1:41) If exhibitions like innovations in spinal surgery, and injury, death, and healing in Civil War Philadelphia sound interesting to you, then you should visit the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia. You can also see actual pieces of Albert Einstein's brain there.

(1:56) So wait, you're saying that this is not actually the real Albert Einstein? Also you can see a gigantic colon from a person who died of toxic megacolon.

(2:01) If the Mütter Museum sounded fun to you, I have some bad news. The Museum of Questionable Medical Devices in Minneapolis is now closed. But, you can still find parts of its collection at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

(2:13) I just hope they held onto the foot-operated breast enlarger and the prostate gland warmer. You know Mark, I've had a lot of thoughts about my prostate gland, but none of them has ever been "I wish this were warmer".

(2:23) Leila's Hair Museum can be found in Independence, Missouri. To quote its website, "[it's] the only hair museum in the world with hundreds of wreaths and thousands of jewelry pieces made from human hair." It also contains locks of hair from Ronald Reagan, Marilyn Monroe, and Michael Jackson. All three of whom, by the way, once owned monkeys. Is a fact I made up.

(2:44) If you've ever seen a horror movie, you're probably going to want to skip The Vent Haven Museum of Ventriloquist Dummies in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. Also, if you haven't ever seen a horror movie. Sorry! Sorry ventriloquist museums, but, you know. You know. I think you know.

(3:00) Eight hundred dummies can be found there, plus it has an annual convention that attracts over six hundred ventriloquists. That's a lot of dummies! All right, let's move on to something more high-brow: an Icelandic penis museum.

(3:13) At the Icelandic Phallological Museum, you can find over 280 penises from 93 species. They are especially proud to have penises representing almost every mammal that's found in Iceland. What, so like people, horses, and lemmings? Sorry Iceland.

(3:28) And now allow me to smoothly transition to talking about the Washington Banana Museum in Auburn, Washington. Its curator is Anne Mitchell Lovel, a proclaimed "long-time scholar of banana consciousness," and she has collected almost 6,000 banana artifacts into one place.

(3:44) A man named Robert Wadlow holds the Guinness World Record for tallest man. He was 8'11" tall when he died in 1940, but if you're curious as to his shoe size, you can find one of his actual shoes at the Giant Shoe Museum in Seattle. Spoiler alert, that's the only actual shoe in the museum that was ever used. The rest are just art.

(4:04) There's only one parasite museum in the world, and it can be found in Tokyo. You can learn all about parasites, and even look at 300 specimens, and don't worry, they do have a gift shop.

(4:13) And if you are already in Japan for the parasite museum, don't skip the ramen museum. You can eat, shop, and race slot cars. The museum has a slot car track that's 30 meters long with six lanes. What does that have to do with ramen? Apparently nothing!

(4:28) Speaking of food, the Burnt Food Museum is located in Arlington, Massachusetts. Museum founder Debra Henson was inspired when she was trying to heat up apple cider, received a long phone call and then discovered that her cider had gotten so burnt that it could stand on its own. Displays at the museum include thrice-baked potato and " why sure, you can bake quiche in the microwave."

(4:48) The Web site of the International Towing and Recovery Museum insists you "set aside several hours to view the arrays of displays and exhibits." The museum can be found in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and contains both a hall of fame and a wall of the fallen, for those who died while towing.

(5:04) The six-story Museum of Clean is located in Pocatello, Idaho. Its true claim to fame is the world's largest collection of vacuum cleaners, almost a thousand of them, but it also has washers, toilets, brooms and much more!

(5:17) You can learn how neon signs are made at the American Sign Museum at Cincinnati, plus you can see and learn the history of - wait for it - signs.

(5:26) Croatia's Museum of Broken Relationships was founded by two artists who encouraged people to donate items from relationships that have ended. This could be anything from wedding dresses to letters to a glass horse. The Web site says, "The Museum offers a chance to overcome an emotional collapse through creation: by contributing to the Museum's collection." But that doesn't seem necessary. I mean, I've done a lot of post-breakup creating without ever donating to a museum - like, I created an empty ice cream pint where there had once been a full one; I created a lot of text messages I probably shouldn't have sent;

and, of course, I have created several lakes of tears.

(5:59) Speaking of museums dedicated to things I know terribly well, there's a beer can museum in Massachusetts that contains 5,000 beer cans from over 50 countries. The curator, Kevin Logan, started collecting beer cans when he was just 14 years old and eventually started a full-fledged museum out of his collection. You know what they say: "Find what you love, and do it for the rest of your life."

(6:19) In Middleton, Wisconsin, you can find the National Mustard Museum, founded by Barry Levinson. He says that after the Boston Red Sox lost the 1986 World Series, he was at a supermarket and heard the mustards whisper, "If you collect us, they will come." Now, the Mustard Museum has over 5,600 mustards AND the Red Sox won a World Series! But do they have DFTBA mustard?

(6:41) Also in Wisconsin, the Spinning Top Museum in Burlington. If tops aren't really your thing, never fear, because they also have a yo-yo exhibit. The museum has a total of 2,000 spinning tops, yo-yos and other spinning toys - so many, in fact, it'll make your head spin. Meredith! What did I say about puns?

(6:58) In Keswick, England, there's a pencil museum, and there you will find the world's longest colored pencil. Because I know that's something you've been waiting for.

(7:05) Another museum dedicated to a common item: the Lock Museum in Terryville, Connecticut. Here you will find - surprise! - a bunch of locks, including a pin tumbler lock from Egypt that's 4,000 years old.

(7:17) The lamp museum in Bruges has a total of 6,000 antique lamps. In case you're not convinced that this is a great time, we went ahead and looked up the Trip Advisor reviews for you. User SAT007 claims, "Was OK! Had the whole place to ourselves"! That's a ringing endorsement if ever I heard one.

(7:34) The International Museum of Toilets in New Delhi contains all kinds of cool toilets from history, like an 18th century French toilet that looks like a bookcase and toilets from 2500 BCE.

(7:46) And if you've been marathoning "Finding Bigfoot," then maybe it's time for a trip to the Bigfoot Discovery Museum in Felton, California. I mean, this museum has everything - except for Bigfoot, of course. You can look into local history, watch Bigfoot documentaries, even see actual plaster hand and foot prints from Bigfoot himself, which seems like something that should be in his mom's garden, not in a museum.

(8:06) But if you prefer your animals, you know, less fictional, there's a cat museum in east Malaysia. Along with cat figurines and toys and paintings, there's an actual mummified cat from ancient Egypt. Oh, we would never sell you to the cat museum. Just kidding - anyone with a thousand bucks can have this cat.

(8:20) And finally, I return to my salon to tell you about the Gelato Museum, which opened in Carpigiani, Italy, in 2012. At the museum, you can learn all about the history of gelato, but more importantly, there is a tasting room!

Thanks for watching Mental Floss on YouTube, which is made with the help of all of these nice people and was made possible by our friends at GEICO. Every week, we endeavor to answer one of your mind-blowing questions. This week's question comes from aliecethepolice, who asks, "When was the first ice cream truck invented?" That, Aliece, is an important question. Well, Good Humor bar inventor Harry Burt created the first ice cream trucks in the 1920s to combine the booming trends of fast food and automobiles. He bought 12 refrigerator trucks to distribute Good Humor bars around his hometown of Youngstown, Ohio, and he made sure the trucks followed the same route every day and rang a bell as they drove. At first, kids would come outside to investigate the noise, but soon it became synonymous with the ice cream truck, and - you know, Pavlov, the bell-ringing, you know the story.

If you have a mind-blowing question you'd like answered, please leave it in the comments below. Thank you again for watching, and as we say in my hometown, "don't forget that someone has dedicated her life to banana artifacts."