

Simply One Page- The Everything Bagel

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision motivated by my one page intent. Mike Haddorff 2627

I have a concern. Not a major concern. Not a concern likely to affect world peace, the national debt, or the outcome of the next election. But a concern nonetheless.

It involves the Everything Bagel.

Somewhere along the way, the bagel industry introduced what can only be described as one of the great culinary achievements of modern civilization. Somebody looked at a perfectly good bagel and thought: "What if we put everything on it?" Poppy seeds. Sesame seeds. Garlic. Onion. Salt. Things nobody can quite identify. Possibly ingredients left over from three other recipes. And thus the Everything Bagel was born.

The problem, however, appears when you reach a certain age.

At my age, ordering an entire bagel feels a bit ambitious. So I often order half. A half order of lox and cream cheese on an Everything Bagel sounds wonderful. Until reality arrives.

Because the Everything Bagel is only covered on the outside. And if your half happens to come from the wrong side of the bagel, you may discover that your Everything Bagel experience contains surprisingly little everything. You may receive all the everything. Or none of the everything. The odds are uncertain. The outcome is unpredictable. You place your order and wait to discover your fate.

Which, if you think about it, sounds suspiciously like life.

Some people seem to receive an extra helping of everything. Good health. Good timing. Good opportunities. Good breaks.

Others look across the table and wonder why their side of the bagel appears somewhat under-seasoned. Life doesn't always distribute the toppings evenly.

I have considered a solution. The bagel industry could introduce the Double Everything Bagel. Everything on both sides. Top and bottom. No uncertainty. No disappointment. Every customer guaranteed the full experience. I suspect it would sell well.

But until that glorious day arrives, we continue living in a world where sometimes we get the heavily seasoned side and sometimes we don't. And perhaps there is something worth learning there.

Most of us spend a surprising amount of time counting someone else's toppings. Comparing. Measuring. Calculating. Wondering why their bagel appears to have more garlic, more sesame seeds, or a suspicious abundance of poppy seeds.

Meanwhile, the cream cheese is still good. The lox is still delicious. The coffee is still hot. The people around us are still worth enjoying. And we are still fortunate enough to be sitting at the table.

Maybe joy begins when we stop demanding the full Everything experience and start appreciating what has already been placed before us. Some days life gives us the heavily seasoned half. Some days it doesn't. Either way, we still get to be here. And honestly, that's pretty good. Even if we're a little light on garlic.