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Twinkies are scheduled to be on local store shelves on Monday, returning one of America's favorite treats to consumers. Courtesy photo

By GISEELLE ARREDONDO

• Leader & Times

An American icon will be returning to grocery and convenience store shelves next week. Soft, cream filled Twinkies will be available once again to the public after being missing in action for more than 180 days.

The new Twinkie will not be coming back as its predecessor. A new recipe that was started by the old ownership of Hostess has extended its shelf life because, contrary to popular belief, Twinkies don't last forever. There is an expiration date guarantee of 45 days instead of 26.

True, the expiration date wouldn't have much on a zombie apocalypse, but that is still nearly double its original shelf life.

During World War II, Twinkies were filled with banana cream, but bananas became scarce, so Hostess switched to Twinkies with vanilla cream, and since people liked Twinkies better that way, that's the way they stayed.

Twinkies do have new ingredients that break the rules, but they are still supposed to taste the same.

They do not require the use of milk, butter or eggs to achieve its moisture and tenderness. Today, they consist of mainly sugar and flour, because milk could cause them to go rancid. However, they do contain monoglycerides and diglycerides, emulsifiers that are also found in milk.

The buttery flavor is worked up with diacetyl, which is the same ingredient used to make buttery popcorn. Other ingredients used are polysorbate 60, an emulsifier derived from oil palm trees, corn syrup and ethylene oxide. Polysorbate 60 is a goo that resembles an egg yolk but is actually stronger. Eggs are present in Twinkies but in incredibly small portions, about 1/500 of an egg per cake.

These ingredients work together to help extend shelf life of a Twinkie. The only actual preservative is sorbic acid, though.

Other ingredients still remain a mystery. In the past, Twinkies were made by baking for a couple of minutes; injecting them with cream; flipping them over so the round bottom is at the top; then packaging for shipping. It sounds really simple to make, but now no one really knows how they will be made. That too, is a mystery.

Hostess also makes Vanilla Zingers, Ding Dongs, Orange Cup Cakes and Chocolate Fingers.

Twinkies are expected to create a rave as they sit in shelves for crazed Twinkie lovers all over the nation Monday.

Local stores in town are also participating, including Wal-Mart.

The return of Twinkies is what many have been calling “the sweetest come back in the history of ever.”

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