
Why There Is Almost No Wendy's in Europe (and more)

From Roots by fern <roots@watchfern.com>

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+ This ancient life
form is a biological
mystery



What's good?

This is the very first Roots newsletter.

Excitngggggg.

Roots is the start of fern's next chapter. This is a space for the stories, ideas, conversations and details that don't fit into our

YouTube videos.

It's a platform to share personal thoughts, too.

Like this one: YouTube is ruthless, grueling and hyper-competitive, and I am grateful for it. I don't think there is another space on earth where young journalists and filmmakers can grow as fast as they can here on the big Why Tee. You're constantly moving, you constantly get feedback and audiences do value and appreciate depth. If you don't make sense, trust, the comment section will let you know.

But. BUT.

With every piece of work having to compete for air(time, lol), desperately flapping its wings on the limited surface that is the homepage before the new thing inevitably comes, pulls at its legs and drowns it, things that are raw and intimate have a hard time.

The kind of video a creator might've made in 2016, speaking to the people who really care, their community, is having a harder time today. Because if it's not interesting to all, it shall be shown to none.

The subscribe button doesn't mean much anymore. Clicking it is all but a small signal to be interpreted by the recommendation algorithm. Except for a few retro punks using the "Subscriptions" tab, we all let all the content come to us.

Cynically put, we're gluttonous creatures with our mouths wide open at the end of a one-way ~~sushi~~ content conveyor belt. Less cynically put, we get to explore more, and each video may find its audience.

But being subscribed to something is great. It's a show of support, it's the willingness to be part of something. It's a signal of trust that the outlet you chose to let into your inbox possesses the ability to entertain or educate you, or, best case, a bit of both. And it allows for writing that is more intimate and raw, like this.

Thank you for subscribing and for being part of this from the beginning. It genuinely means a lot that you are giving us space in your inbox and joining us while Roots is still taking shape.

There is a lot more coming soon. More stories, more behind-the-scenes material, more things we could not stop talking about and, hopefully, plenty of unexpected finds along the way.

For now, grab a coffee, have a scroll and enjoy the first issue.

A warm welcome,
Jonas

Why there is (almost) no Wendy's in Europe



A Baconator at Wendy's in Oxford, UK, 9 June 2026. Photo: Jamie Fullerton

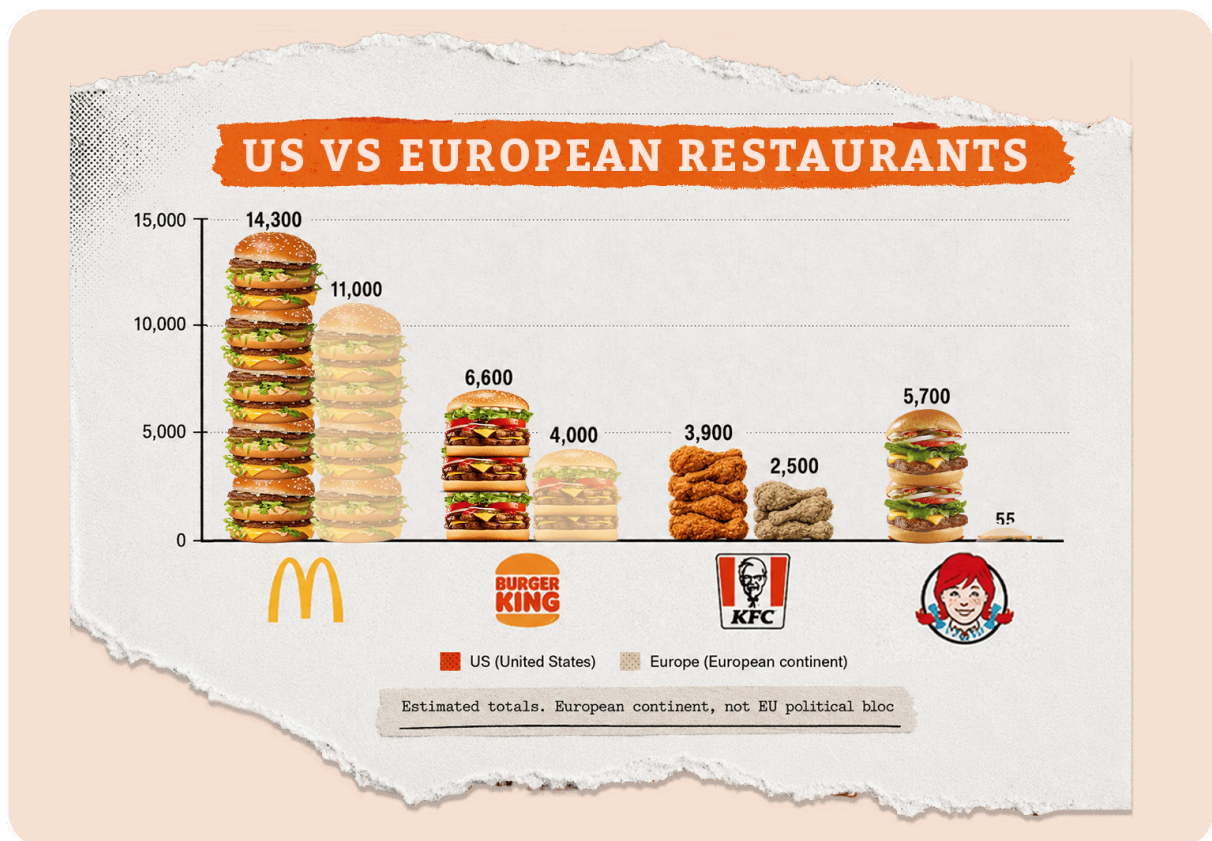
Recently we ate a Baconator at Wendy's in Oxford, UK. It was pretty tasty.

The Oxford restaurant was one of the first Wendy's to open in the country, when the US fast-food chain returned to the UK in [2021](#), 20 years after exiting.

Now there are around 50 stores across the [country](#).

Beyond the UK, in Europe it's much harder to find a Dave's Single. McDonald's and Burger King have thousands of stores across Europe, but Wendy's only has seven outside the UK: one in [Ireland](#) and [six](#) in Romania.

That's weird, considering Wendy's is the second-biggest burger chain in the US, going by [sales](#).



A big reason for that low count lies with one stubborn Dutchman.

Raymond Warrens is the owner of Wendy's Fish & Chips in the Dutch city [Goes](#). In 1995 he trademarked the name "Wendy's" across the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg. Wendy's has made claims to the trademark in those countries since, but courts always sided with [Warrens](#).

Warrens has never agreed to any kind of settlement with Wendy's, and he doesn't seem likely to. One of his managers has referred to US Wendy's lawyers as "[those CSI ladies](#)".

So, decades on, Wendy's still can't open burger joints under the Wendy's name in the

Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg.

It's been misreported that Warrens' Wendy's trademark became valid across EU countries.

The US firm can in fact open Wendy's restaurants in the EU, just not in those three aforementioned countries. But Wendy's seems to still be hurting from withdrawing from markets including the UK, Germany and Spain around 2001, having failed to get the sales and brand recognition of US burger rivals there.

There are signs that the chain is tentatively having another go at success on the continent. 170 new Wendy's restaurants are planned for [Italy](#), and Wendy's executives said they are also targeting [Spain](#).

But as Wendy's eyes a European return, as long as Warrens continues to sling French fries in

Goes, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg will likely remain a Baconator-free zone.

Written & researched by Jamie Fullerton, edited by Jonas. Illustrations by Nikki.

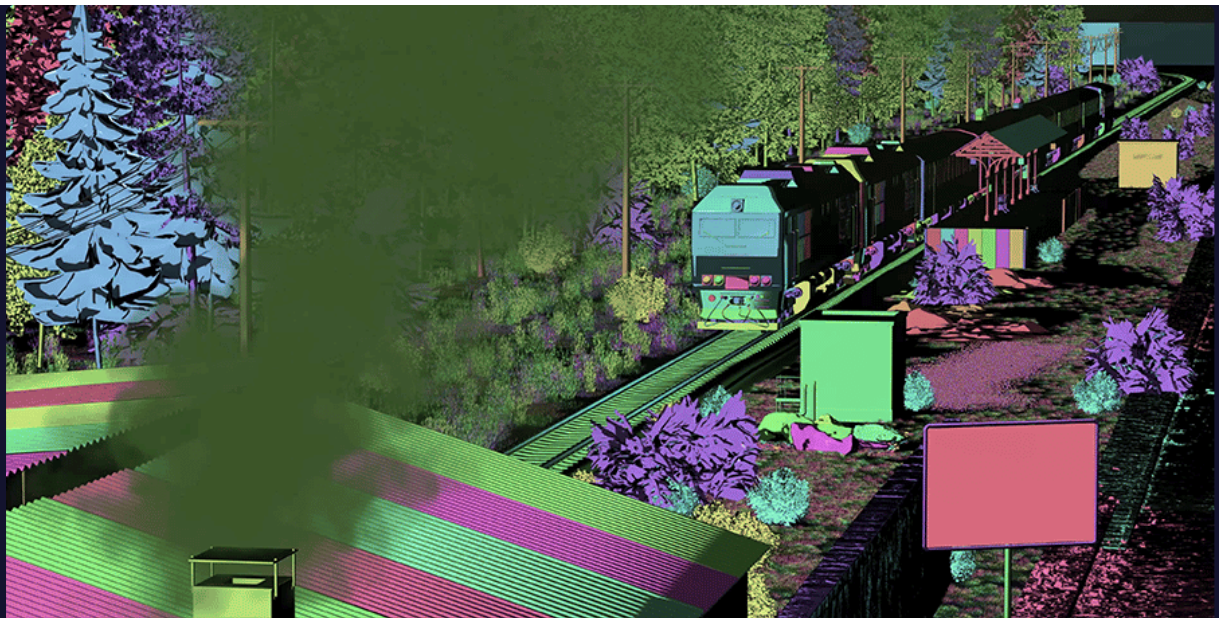
Behind the Scenes of Our Latest Video

In our latest video, we looked at the strange and elaborate ways Vladimir Putin protects himself from attacks. From an armoured limousine and decoy planes to a secret train that barely shows up anywhere, his security measures get pretty wild.

Watch the full video here:



And here's a little look behind the scenes: two of our 3D shots before they became the final renders. The raw scenes might look simple at first, but lighting, materials, textures, and compositing really bring them to life.





This ancient life form is a biological mystery



In 1843 the first fossil fragments of a mysterious life form were discovered. It's called *Prototaxites* and existed hundreds of millions of years ago. It may have looked like a knobby human finger protruding up from the ground, and some could grow taller than a giraffe.

Artistic impressions show trunk-like *Prototaxites* dominating landscapes, rising up from ground vegetation like living chimneys. They may have looked tree-ish (the name means "early" or "primitive yew"), but researchers have long been puzzled about what *Prototaxites* actually were.

Scientists have linked the imposingly phallic entities with ancient fungus. But a new study has bolstered the view that *Prototaxites* may have been its own category of life, not fungi, plant or animal.

Prototaxites fossil records date them between the late Silurian and Late Devonian periods: 420 to 370 million years ago. It's been hypothesized that they may have garnered energy from dead plants and other organic matter around them, like fungus does. And the

But when *Prototaxites* were around, there were no forests, and plants were small. How would a life form that could grow so huge get enough energy to sustain itself?

In January a study called [Prototaxites Fossils are Structurally and Chemically Distinct From Extinct and Extant Fungi](#) was published in Science Advances. As the title suggests, researchers were sceptical about *Prototaxites* being categorised as a fungus. The organism was made of interwoven tubes, that would have made it look fungi-like, superficially at least.

But Laura Cooper, the study's co-lead at the University of Edinburgh, told [Scientific American](#): "It doesn't seem to have any of the characteristic features of the living fungal groups." Other scientists have said that *Prototaxites* doesn't sit comfortably anywhere, in terms of categorization.

The title of the 2022 research paper [What to do With Prototaxites?](#) summed up the mystery nicely. The authors suggest that *Prototaxites* could have been part of an extinct fungus lineage, or perhaps even a lichen. But ultimately, they said, it was "among the most enigmatic of terrestrial fossils".

It's an enigmatic status that endures, despite the 2026 study into *Prototaxites*'s origins.

And Cooper, the new study co-lead, said that as well as *Prototaxites* potentially being its own living being category, its biological processes were still essentially a "mystery".

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NEXT ON FERN

Here are a few sneak peeks from our next video. Can you guess what it's about?

Hint: we're returning to one of our favourite genres.

