

# Oddball Antics: 10 Hilarious Pranks and Hoaxes That Fooled the World



They say “laughter is the best medicine”, and nothing brings a smile to our faces like a well-executed prank.

Sit back, relax, and let’s dive into ten of the most hilarious pranks and hoaxes that left the world in stitches.

## Pasta La Vista, Baby!

In 1957, BBC’s Panorama program fooled Britain by airing a report on Swiss farmers harvesting spaghetti from trees. At that time, spaghetti wasn’t a regular staple in the English diet, and was actually considered more of a delicacy.

The news that this delicious dish could actually be grown on trees had local residents itching to get their own pasta plants so that they could grow their favorite Italian dish.

## A Crunchy Piece of History

In 1996, fast-food chain Taco Bell announced they had purchased the Liberty Bell and renamed it the “Taco Liberty Bell”.

The audacious hoax had Americans ringing with laughter and demanding to “let freedom ring” with every bite.

## A Southpaw Special

In 1998, Burger King saw an opportunity to flip the script on their unsuspecting customers. They whipped up a whopper of a prank – an ad that had lefties everywhere salivating – the “Left-Handed Whopper.”

This cheeky creation was designed with southpaws in mind, promising an easier, less-messy burger experience.

Left-handers everywhere were thrilled, thinking they’d finally have a burger that catered to their unique needs. Little did they know, they’d bitten into a big, juicy joke.

Burger King reveled in their clever ruse, as lefties around the globe discovered it was all just a well-seasoned, flame-grilled gag.

## Lunar Lunacy

Back in 1835, the New York Sun was feeling a bit overshadowed by a rival newspaper, so they cooked up a spicy scheme to rocket their readership sky-high.

They published a sensational six-part series revealing that life had been found on the moon, thanks to the keen eye of an English astronomer and his trusty super-sized telescope.

These lunar liars went all in, sharing vivid illustrations of moon-dwelling creatures that looked like a funky mix of humans and bats.

As you can imagine, people went absolutely over-the-moon with excitement, and The New York Sun’s sales shot up like a rocket.

## Smell Ya Later!

In 2013, Google introduced “Google Nose”, a feature that allowed users to search for and experience smells through their computers.

Google claimed to have an more than 15,000,000 “scentibytes” in an “aromabase”, containing scents representing everything from garbage to public buildings.

The internet was left sniffing for answers when they realized it was just another one of Google’s famous April Fool’s Day pranks.

## A Soaring Surprise

BBC struck again in 2008 with a documentary about a newly discovered colony of flying penguins.

The video was presented by Terry Jones, of Monty Python fame, and featured Adelie penguins apparently taking flight at King George’s Island.

The sight of these adorable tuxedoed birds taking to the skies left audiences bewildered and marveling at the supposed evidence of evolution.

## A Typographical Paradise

In 1977, the Guardian published an elaborate report – along with a map - of the fictional island nation of San Serriffe.

The fictional island was described in great detail in a 7-page newspaper supplement, which included everything you might want to know about the Indian Ocean island.

The articles and descriptions had readers eagerly planning their next vacation to this nonexistent paradise.

## An Automaton Enigma

In 1770, inventor Wolfgang von Kempelen unveiled “The Turk,” a chess-playing automaton that appeared to be an incredible feat of engineering.

The Turk faced – and defeated – worthy opponents across Europe and America. It even played against Benjamin Franklin and Napoleon Bonaparte.

The “machine” was revealed to be an elaborate hoax, with a human chess player hidden inside.

The Turk was exhibited by several owners until it was destroyed by fire in 1854.

## Ape Art

In 1964, a journalist by the name of Axe Axelsson grew tired of the abstract art trend that critics seemed to adore.

Axelsson had little appreciation for the style of art, and wondered if anyone could tell the difference between the art created by famous artists and paintings by a chimpanzee. He decided to test out his theory and located a young chimp, named Peter, at the zoo.

Peter created four paintings, and Axelsson was able to display the art in a show in Sweden. The artist's name was listed as Pierre Brassau.

The art world was fooled, and Pierre Brassau became an overnight sensation.

## Fake Fossils

In 1912, amateur archaeologist Charles Dawson claimed to have discovered the "missing link" between apes and humans in Piltdown, England.

The so-called "Piltdown Man" skull fragments were later revealed to be a forgery in 1953, consisting of a human skull combined with an orangutan jawbone.

The hoax had fooled scientists and the public for over 40 years, although some thought the fragments were the natural result of some fossilized remains being mixed over time.

It was suspected that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the British author of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, was involved in the hoax, because he lived near the area of the "discovery" and had written about ape-like creatures in one of his novels. Doyle's name was later cleared, but he was only one of many people accused of participating in the mystery. Many still wonder who went to the trouble of fooling the unsuspecting public.

While some may say "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me." We can't help but appreciate the creativity and hilarity behind these legendary pranks and hoaxes.

Cheers to these comedic masterminds for providing us with a healthy dose of laughter and a reminder not to take life too seriously.

Sources:

[1] [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/1/newsid\\_2819000/2819261.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/1/newsid_2819000/2819261.stm)

[2] <https://www.phillyvoice.com/two-decades-ago-taco-bell-convinced-america-it-had-bought-liberty-bell/>

- [3] [https://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1888721\\_1888719\\_1888662,00.html](https://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1888721_1888719_1888662,00.html)
- [4] <https://www.britannica.com/story/the-great-moon-hoax-of-1835-was-sci-fi-passed-off-as-news>
- [5] <https://money.cnn.com/2013/04/01/news/april-fools/index.html>
- [6] <https://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=4564489&page=1>
- [7] <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/san-serriffe>
- [8] <https://interestingengineering.com/innovation/the-turk-fake-automaton-chess-player>
- [9] <https://www.thevintagenews.com/2016/11/06/pierre-brassau-the-chimpanzee-painter-who-fooled-the-avant-garde-world/?chrome=1&A1c=1>
- [10] <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna50177891>