Funny pub quiz questions

40 questions in 4 rounds. Read each question out and give teams a moment to write their answers. The host's answer sheet (with a fact to share for each answer) and a team answer sheet to print for every table come after the questions.

Round 1: Weird history

1. In 1932, Australian soldiers armed with machine guns lost a so-called "war" against which large flightless birds?
2. Before it was called Google, Larry Page and Sergey Brin's search engine had what slightly awkward name?
3. Long before video games, Nintendo was founded in Kyoto in 1889 to make what?
4. Which playground and village-fair contest was an Olympic event from 1900 to 1920?
5. In 1518, a strange "plague" broke out in Strasbourg that made people do what for days on end?
6. Teaching at Oxford University began by 1096. Which Mesoamerican civilization didn't found its capital, Tenochtitlan, until about 1325?
7. Which Romantic poet kept a tame bear at Trinity College, Cambridge, where rules banned students from keeping dogs?
8. In the hot summer of 1858, the sewage-filled River Thames gave London "The Great" what?
9. In 1386, which farm animal was put on trial in Falaise, France, found guilty of killing a child and executed?
10. In 1896, Walter Arnold of Kent became the first person charged with speeding. In a 2 mph limit, roughly how fast was he going?

Round 2: Strange animals

1. What is the collective noun for a group of flamingos?
2. Butterflies can taste with which part of their bodies?
3. The long, spiraling "horn" of which Arctic whale is actually an overgrown tooth?
4. Which small seafood favorite, often served in a cocktail, has its heart in its head?
5. Which bearded farmyard animal has rectangular, letterbox-shaped pupils?
6. Which bird has eyes that are bigger than its brain?
7. Sea otters sometimes wrap themselves in what so they don't drift away while they sleep?
8. Which large African animal oozes a reddish "sweat" that works as a natural sunscreen?
9. Under ultraviolet light, the fur of which egg-laying Australian mammal glows blue-green?
10. North America's wood frog survives the winter by doing what?

Round 3: Silly science and food

1. Which popular yellow fruit is very slightly radioactive, thanks to the potassium it contains?
2. Hawaiian pizza was invented in 1962 by a Greek-born restaurant owner in which country?
3. Before it became a children's toy in 1956, Play-Doh was sold as what?
4. During World War II, Britain claimed its night-fighter pilots could see in the dark thanks to eating lots of which vegetable?
5. The Caesar salad is named after Caesar Cardini, an Italian immigrant who created it in 1924 in which country?
6. Pepsi-Cola was first sold in 1893 under what much less snappy name?
7. In 1893, the US Supreme Court ruled that, for tax purposes, which fruit should be treated as a vegetable?
8. Astronauts can grow up to 3% taller in space. Which part of the body stretches out?
9. A single sugar cube of material from which kind of collapsed star would weigh about a billion tons on Earth?
10. "Sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia" is the medical name for which chilly complaint?

Round 4: Odd world and oddly true

1. In 2012, the town of Boring in Oregon voted to pair up with which similarly named village in Scotland?
2. Since 1992, Singapore has banned the sale of which everyday item, apart from medical versions sold by pharmacists?
3. Swiss animal welfare law says you can't keep just one of which small, sociable pet?
4. In 1950, the town of Hot Springs in New Mexico renamed itself after a radio quiz show. What is it called now?
5. Every Shrove Tuesday, pan-carrying runners in Olney, England, race against women in Liberal, a town in which US state?
6. The world's shortest scheduled flight, from Westray to Papa Westray, is in which Scottish island group?
7. Which landlocked South American country still has a navy, which patrols Lake Titicaca and its rivers?
8. Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg, one of America's longest place names, is in which New England state?
9. Saint-Louis-du-Ha! Ha!, a town with two exclamation marks in its name, is in which Canadian province?
10. Under Britain's Salmon Act 1986, it is an offense to handle salmon in what kind of circumstances?

Answer sheet

For the host. The facts in gray are extras to read out after each answer.

Round 1: Weird history

1. **Emus**
   The officer in charge, Major Meredith, complained that the emus could "face machine guns with the invulnerability of tanks."
2. **BackRub**
   "Google" came from a misspelling of "googol" when a colleague checked which web address was free in 1997.
3. **Playing cards (accept hanafuda cards)**
   Its first product was hanafuda: decks of 48 ornate flower cards in 12 suits, one for each month of the year.
4. **Tug of war**
   At the 1908 London Games, British police teams swept the medals: City of London first, Liverpool second and the Metropolitan Police third.
5. **Dance (accept the dancing plague)**
   At first officials tried letting the victims dance it out: they built a stage and hired musicians and professional dancers to keep everyone going.
6. **The Aztecs (accept the Mexica or Aztec Empire)**
   Oxford's teachers were formally recognized as a universitas, or corporation, in 1231, almost a century before Tenochtitlan was founded.
7. **Lord Byron (accept Byron)**
   When asked what he meant to do with the bear, Byron replied that it "should sit for a fellowship."
8. **Stink (The Great Stink)**
   Parliament rushed through a bill to fund new sewers in just 18 days, and Joseph Bazalgette's tunnels still form the backbone of London's sewers.
9. **A pig (accept sow)**
   She was led to her execution dressed in a man's clothes.
10. **8 mph (accept anything from 7 to 9 mph)**
    He was chased down by a policeman on a bicycle.

Round 2: Strange animals

1. **A flamboyance**
   The word "flamingo" comes from Spanish and Portuguese "flamengo," referring to a flame-like color.
2. **Their feet**
   A female drums a leaf with her feet to check its chemicals before deciding whether to lay her eggs there.
3. **Narwhal**
   Medieval traders sold narwhal tusks to wealthy Europeans as genuine unicorn horns.
4. **Shrimp (accept prawn)**
   Strictly, the heart sits in the cephalothorax, the fused head-and-chest section, alongside its stomach.
5. **Goat (accept sheep)**
   When a goat lowers its head to graze, its eyes rotate so the pupils stay level with the ground.
6. **Ostrich**
   Each eye can measure up to 50 mm (2 in) across, while its brain is no bigger than a walnut.
7. **Kelp (accept seaweed)**
   A group of otters floating together is called a raft, and some rafts hold more than 100 otters.

8. **Hippopotamus (accept hippo)**
   The red fluid is neither blood nor true sweat, and in lab tests it also slowed the growth of disease-causing bacteria.
9. **Platypus**
   Scientists found it out of curiosity: while studying glowing flying squirrels, they shone a UV light on a platypus specimen in a museum collection.
10. **Freezing solid (accept freezing, including its heart)**
    Its liver floods the body with glucose, which acts as an antifreeze to protect its cells until it thaws in spring.

Round 3: Silly science and food

1. **Banana**
   Scientists even use the "banana equivalent dose" as an informal way of explaining tiny doses of radiation.
2. **Canada**
   Sam Panopoulos first served it at the Satellite restaurant in Chatham, Ontario.
3. **Wallpaper cleaner**
   Sales slumped when homes switched from coal heating to oil and gas, leaving far less soot on the walls.
4. **Carrots**
   The real secret was airborne radar, and the story centered on ace pilot John "Cat's Eyes" Cunningham.
5. **Mexico (accept Tijuana)**
   Tijuana was then busy with Americans who crossed the border to drink legally during Prohibition.
6. **Brad's Drink**
   Pharmacist Caleb Bradham renamed it Pepsi-Cola in 1898 at his pharmacy in New Bern, North Carolina.
7. **Tomato**
   The judges admitted it was botanically a fruit, but noted people serve it with the main course and not as dessert.
8. **The spine (accept backbone or vertebrae)**
   The extra height disappears within a few months of returning to Earth.
9. **Neutron star**
   NASA says that's about as much as a mountain.
10. **Brain freeze (accept ice cream headache)**
    To ease it, press your tongue firmly against the roof of your mouth until the pain fades.

Round 4: Odd world and oddly true

1. **Dull**
   The idea came from a Scottish woman who cycled through Boring on vacation, and Boring's T-shirts call it a "Pair for the Ages."
2. **Chewing gum**
   The ban followed vandals sticking gum on the door sensors of the city's MRT trains.
3. **Guinea pig**
   One woman near Zürich even set up a rent-a-guinea-pig service for owners whose pet had lost its companion.
4. **Truth or Consequences**
   Host Ralph Edwards broadcast the show's 10th-anniversary episode from the newly renamed town the very next day.
5. **Kansas**
   Olney's pancake race is said to date back to 1445, and the transatlantic rivalry has run since 1950.
6. **Orkney (accept the Orkney Islands)**
   The hop covers just 1.7 miles (2.7 km), and the fastest flight on record took 53 seconds.

7. **Bolivia**
   Bolivia lost its coastline to Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879 to 1883), and a 1904 treaty made the loss permanent.

8. **Massachusetts**
   Its famous translation, "You fish on your side, I'll fish on my side," was invented as a joke by a local newspaper editor in 1921.

9. **Quebec**
   "Haha" is an old French word for an unexpected obstacle or a path that ends abruptly.

10. **Suspicious circumstances**
    The law targets anyone receiving or moving salmon they believe, or should suspect, was taken illegally; a 2009 amendment widened it to other fish.

Team answer sheet

Print one for each team. 40 questions.

Team name _____

Round 1: Weird history

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Score _____ / 10

Round 2: Strange animals

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Score _____ / 10

Round 3: Silly science and food

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Score _____ / 10

Round 4: Odd world and oddly true

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Score _____ / 10

Total score _____ / 40