

Eating Insects!

That's right! Entomophagy is eating insects and in the U.S., it's predicted that you'll eat as much as 1 pound of insects in your lifetime - by accident, of course.

That's because insects and parts of insects are impossible to eliminate completely in modern food harvesting and processing. Consequently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration allows a certain amount of bugs and bug parts in your processed food. So one way or the other, we've all eaten insects.

But as much as we dislike the thought of eating insects, there are a lot of cultures around the world who think differently. Many native societies in Australia, Asia, Africa and elsewhere have a long history of eating insects for a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals.

In fact, there are 1,462 recorded species of edible insects.

Many of the insects eaten are those that can be gathered in large number, like ants, termites and locusts (grasshoppers).

Consider this menu:

LOCUSTS: These insects are eaten in parts of Africa and increasingly in South Korea. They are boiled, cleaned and salted after being gathered early in the morning before they're active. The photograph to the right shows two desert locusts!



These are
Desert
Locusts!

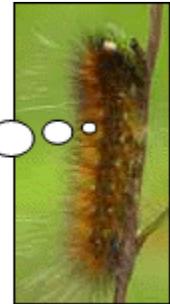
TERMITES: These insects are a popular food in parts of Africa and Australia, particularly the large queen castes, where one single termite can measure up to 3 inches long. They are typically eaten lightly salted and are a better source of protein than beef, but they also are really high in fat so some people covert them into a colorless oil used for frying.



Termites!

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CATERPILLARS: In Mexico, caterpillars from the Giant Skippers are sold fresh in markets and then fried before eaten. Many beetle grubs (baby beetles that are a lot like caterpillars) are also popular. The Goliath beetle reaches to a length of 5 1/2 inches and is a favorite in Africa. Silkworm pupae and ant eggs are also popular in Asia and Africa. Look at the caterpillar to the right. It looks really poky, but it's actually soft and fuzzy!



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CRICKETS: In Thailand, crickets - considered one of the best tasting insects - are cooked and served as crunchy snacks. The mole cricket, in particular, is a favorite because it contains high levels of protein, iron, calcium, phosphorus, vitamins B1 and B2 and niacin. These are all important vitamins and minerals that help keep you healthy. Look at this mole cricket...yuck! Would you eat one?



BEETLES: Despite their hard shells, adult beetles are also yummy! People in Thailand eat water beetles and people in China eat giant water bugs. They consider them a delicacy, which means that they are a super fancy snack!!! What do you think? Would you like to eat a beetle for a holiday dinner?



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BEES: Wild honey bees are a popular treat in Thailand and they are so heavily hunted as a food item, that researchers believe that small farmers should start raising them to help both the farmer's income and prevent extinction.



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Website source:

<http://www.sidney.ars.usda.gov/sidebar/justforkids2.html>