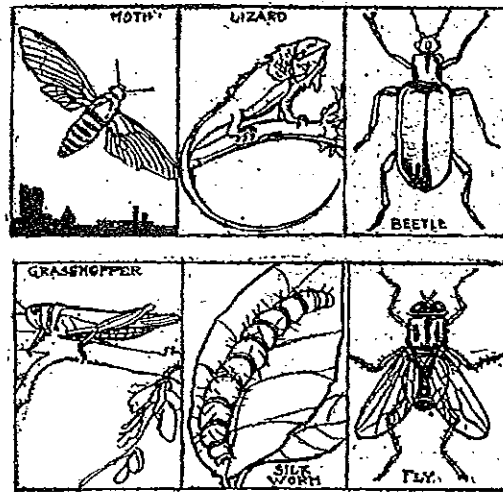


# Bugs May Become Popular Food



INSECTS STAPLE ARTICLE OF DIET IN MANY COUNTRIES COULD BE USED HERE TO REDUCE COST OF LIVING.

(New York American.)

**T**HE use of insects for food is very common among the natives of various countries. Almost every kind of insect forms a staple article of food in some parts of the world. The practice is a very ancient one, and the fact that increasing civilization does not seem to do away with it would tend to lead to the conclusion that prejudice has much to do with the choosing of our food.

The most popular insect food is the locust or grasshopper. Some tribes live almost entirely upon this insect, as did John the Baptist of old. In ancient Athens locusts were regarded as dainties and the Arabs to this day make them into a sort of flour. Some African tribes prepare a soup of locusts, and grasshopper pie is a favorite dessert among the natives of the Philippine Islands.

In Russia the locusts are smoked like fish; in Algeria they are boiled in water and salted. The legs and wings are always removed and the insect is dried before being eaten; no tribe eats the green insect. When properly cooked and seasoned locusts are very palatable and resemble beef broth somewhat in taste. Fried locusts are also very delicious.

It is certain that the locust is a very nourishing food, for locust-eating tribes are invariably fat and healthy.

Among the native Filipinos the grasshopper is the most common article of food. The insects in the Philippines grow to a very great size and travel in swarms. These swarms will settle on a farm, and while the grasshopper is eating up the vegetation he is in turn being captured by the farmer.

The natives have an interesting way of catching the insects. Bellboys are stationed in the towers of the large churches of a town and when a swarm is sighted the boys sound the grasshopper signals on the bell. Hundreds of catchers then turn out with large nets, similar to butterfly nets, and surround the swarms. Another way of catching them is by taking a long pole with a flat slick on the end of it and swinging it through the swarms of grasshoppers. Large numbers of the insects are in this way beaten to the ground, and, after they have been dried by the sun, can be collected. Still another method employed is to explode cartridges among the insects, which are stunned by the shock and can be gathered from the ground, where they sometimes lie two or three inches deep.

The grasshopper industry is a profitable one. The insects sell for about \$2 a sack and can be found in the markets the year round. The natives fill their pockets with grasshoppers and eat them on the street as one would eat peanuts. A very tasty candy is made by sweetening the grasshoppers with brown sugar and adding chocolate trimmings. Grasshopper cake and grasshopper pie are among the choicest dishes of the native board. The pie especially is a marvel of cookery. The insects are cooked in the pie and others are artistically arranged on the top of the crust. The filling reminds one a little of raisin pie.

In some parts of the islands the grasshoppers are ground to a powder, reduced

to a liquid and drunk—a sort of grasshopperade.

Another favorite Filipino delicacy is the moth. These grow in such numbers that in some places they can be scraped off the walls by the quart. Large expeditions go moth-hunting and capture many bushels.

The natives remove the heads, wings and legs of the moths by the application of an intense heat. The bodies, eaten with sugar, make, for the natives at least, very palatable delicacies.

Insect foods only second in popularity to the grasshopper are the caterpillar and grub. The grub of the common cockchafer is said to be a very dainty food.

In France the insect is rolled in bread crumbs, seasoned with salt and pepper, wrapped in buttered paper and cooked 20 minutes. The result is declared to be the finest delicacy ever tasted. Americans who have been persuaded to eat them have found them very good eating.

The ancient Greeks ate harvest flies and crickets. The latter are eaten to-day by some of the natives of East Africa. The French peasant children are said to catch bees and squeeze the honey from them for food. In Arizona the Indian children catch and eat ants, and in Mexico the honey ant is very much eaten. A curious fly is also eaten in Mexico. The eggs of this fly are also used, being ground into meal and used in various food. Certain Indians consider worms a delicacy.

In South Africa a large lizard, the iguana, is a delicacy, and rattlesnakes form a staple article of food.

The larvae of the beetle were eaten by the ancient Romans and to-day are used as food by the people of the West Indies. In parts of Germany, also, large beetles are cooked and eaten in various ways.

The orioles of Bourbon are said to broil and eat the cockroach. Ants, cooked in various ways are eaten by many different tribes. The Africans cook them in butter, while in Brazil a resinous sauce is used. The Siamese use the eggs of the ant. The white ant is eaten raw by some of the natives of India. The natives of Ceylon are said to eat bees and the Mexicans eat a cake made out of bees' eggs.

The Chinese get a very palatable food from the chrysalis of the silk worm. The poor remove the envelope, broil the chrysalis and eat it with salt and pepper. In the homes of wealth, however, the chrysalis is fried in lard, butter or oil, and mixed with the yolk of an egg.

But the strangest of all food is the larvae of a certain fly, common in California and known as the Ephedra. The flies are washed on the shore in windrows and can be collected in bushel baskets. The Indians gather them, dry them and grow fat on them.

It may be said that all civilized races are insect-eaters in greater or less degree. There is a certain insect, the corn weevil which eats our grain and sometimes does thousands of dollars' worth of damage to a single crop. No matter how clean the wheat is, there are almost sure to be a few of these insects hidden away among the kernels, and these are ground up into flour and become a part of our bread and cake.