



## Insect Haute Cuisine

Now, don't get nauseous reading this article. It is about insects and their relatives being used as food by humans. Insects are very abundant, so it is with good reason that they have been used as nourishment by people throughout the world. Silkworms have been used for centuries to make cloth, the silk being spun off the cocoons which are floating in boiling water. Inside the cocoon, the pupa or resting stage of the moth, is killed in this process. What to do with the expired pupae? The Japanese and Chinese deep fry them in oil and use them as a snack. Sort of like "popworm"??!

Australian aborigines use beetle grubs and caterpillars as a regular part of their diets. It sure beats trying to run down a kangaroo!

Grasshoppers are very abundant in Africa, and often become a plague, eating total crops of the farmers. Turn about is fair play, however, since the grasshoppers provide good protein when they are deep fried. Just remember to take off the legs before crunching down on them. hey say they taste like roasted nuts! I wouldn't know!

There was a recent TV special about the Giant Forest Tarantulas of South America. It is a huge spider larger than your hand! The special also showed how natives hunted down these spiders and then roasted them over an open fire. This roasting burned and removed the irritating hairs covering the body of the spider. The legs and body were then cracked open and the flesh was eaten. The narrator claimed the spider tasted a lot like crab. A bonus came if the animal was a female, since the eggs in the abdomen are a delicacy.

Another TV special showed South American natives climbing high in trees to obtain caterpillars that live and feed in large groups. When they were brought down from the tree they were wrapped in banana leaves and steamed. All then partook of the delicate morsels.

You remember the fad of chocolate ants, don't you? They tasted a bit sour, due to the presence of formic acid in the ants. There were other chocolate covered insects also, but I can't remember what they were! I got some raw honey from a friend about a year ago and had to smile because it had bee parts mixed in. I called the inclusions "bee's knees".

If you take the Advanced Insect Identification class that we offer, I will give you a bonus prize. It's called a "cricket lickit." A lollipop with a real cricket inside. Only had one person eat the lollipop down to the cricket. Who knows? You might like this bit of bug cuisine!

