

BOOK REVIEW

GORDON D.G.: THE EAT-A-BUG COOKBOOK. 33 WAYS TO COOK GRASSHOPPERS, ANTS, WATER BUGS, SPIDERS, CENTIPEDES, AND THEIR KIN. Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, California, 1998, 102 pp. ISBN 0-89815-977-6. Price USD 12.95.

Entomophagy or arthropodophagy (not antropophagy!) is a common phenomenon. It is a fact that our prehistoric ancestors living in caves ate insects, as their coprolites (desiccated feces) contains the eggs of thorny-headed worms (screw worms). These worms have insects as their intermediate hosts. Larval grub forms, crickets and grasshoppers, and probably beetles and cockroaches were an integral part of the diet [see, for instance, *Science* **163**(1969): 1324].

The habit of eating insects has persisted until today, although in principle it is restricted only to some geographical regions. The list of insect eaters would be large, so remember only some contemporary Africal tribes collecting and eating caterpillars. For all gourmets and "connoisseurs" of various delicatesses made from something very special, there appeared last year this cookbook!

In the introductory part of the book, one finds information about the benefits of bug eating (the table on nutritional value of various insects, protein, fat, carbohydrate, calcium and iron inclusive), seasonal availability of edible arthropods, cooking techniques (steaming, boiling, sautéing, stir-frying, deep-frying, dry-roasting and grilling), and also advice on the best beverages

for bugs. Some connoisseurs recommend Pinot Gris, other ones Sauvignon Blanc or champagne! ("There's nothing better than some bubbly to wash bugs down.")

Recipes are presented in a classical way, with all ingredients and their quanta listed and meal preparation perfectly described. The repertoire is enlarged by a group of insects and arthropods that are not named in the subtitle of the book. For instance, there are recipes for meals using cockroaches, termites, bees etc. For stimulating our imagination, let us introduce some names of meals – Bugs in a Rug, Orthopteran Orzo, Piz-zz-zz-za from Cicadas, Cockroach à la King, Ants in Pants, Ample Drumsticks (from Centipedes), Giant Water Bug on Watercross, Larval Latkes (a.k.a. Grubsteaks), Carried Termite Stew or Chocolate Cricket Torte. If your mouth does not water, the illustrations might help. Almost each page is illustrated by "shadow" pictures of arthropods (including ticks, sic!, without recipes fortunately) and there are eight full-collor, really splendid inserts demonstrating what the results of cooking look like. "Juicy" caterpillars as Fried Green Tomato Hornworm might be attractive. Worse would probably be the Scorpion Scaloppine or a big centipede as Ample Drumsticks. At the end of the book are "Resources", e.g. some literature and addresses, for instance, of suppliers of edible Arthropoda and sellers of prepared edible arthropods.

If not for real cooking, the book is commandable as a curiosity. It is well done!

J. Chalupský