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Ever Eaten Eggshells?

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Ever Eaten Eggshells?

AMERICANS, more than any other nationality, have long been notorious for the number of foods considered inedible. This, of course, is because we have always had a wide abundance of foodstuffs to choose from, both as to variety and quantity.

The war has made us nutrition conscious, and we have been forced to take a more realistic attitude toward food in the last few years. Rationing and food shortages have proved themselves to be good tests of the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the American homemaker, for her family is still loudly demanding things that are good to eat. The day is not far off, however, when they will have food served to them in a variety of dishes and flavors never before dreamed of. We may even learn to judge food by our taste-buds instead of our prejudices.

The postwar grocer will be displaying hundreds of new foods never before thought edible or enjoyable. Delicately flavored tropical fruits, such as the mango, papaya and guava, will be as familiar in 1950 as are oranges and bananas today. Alfalfa may soon join beet greens and kale as an edible source of vitamin A. Some parts of cornstalks may be substituted for corn on the cob. Research workers claim these two forms of plant life are an excellent source of some nutrients, and they are working now on ways to improve their palatability and digestibility. Other tests are being conducted on asparagus butts and pea vines. In the meat market we will find chipmunk, muskrat, ground squirrel and rattlesnake meat along with beef steak and pork chops.

Egg shells, which are easily assimilated into the human system, are an excellent source of calcium carbonate, essential for healthy bones and teeth. But for years people have been casually tossing them into their garbage cans, thinking them one of the last possible things fit for human consumption. Recently, however, a machine has been put into operation which pulverizes the shell. The shells can then be added to eggs before they are dehydrated, and the resulting powder is much more nutritious than the eggs alone. Beef and chicken bones are another source of calcium and other natural minerals now literally being thrown to the dogs.

In some lands ants are made into a paste and spread on bread and butter like jam. In other countries green weaver ants are mixed with rice, and the formic acid which the ants supply gives the rice a pungent flavor that some people enjoy. Natives of North Queensland, Australia, drink ants which have been mashed and mixed with water. This concoction is said to taste like lemon squash.

Termites are such a valuable food in Africa that fighting has broken out in some tribes over who shall have the ownership of a disputed nest. There is a certain knack of popping the live termites into the mouth and synchronizing the bite which must be mastered, for if the insect is enraged, he will give the tongue an angry sting.

In China the quality of eggs is judged not in terms of freshness by days, but in terms of age by years. The older the egg is, the more it costs. Chinese restaurants are said to supply their diners with "egg lists" from which they can make their choices. An epicurean might order an egg that is a century old, and surprisingly enough, it will be brought up from its bin in the cellar.—*Lois Gramlich*



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