# It's our food!

#### By JOLEEN LUNJEW

ating creepy crawlies and grubs might sound like something straight out of Fear Factor for some, but for people in the following countries, bugs are as common as fast food.

#### **Australia**

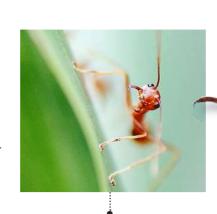
Abundant in southern New South Wales during summer, witchetty grubs — the small, white larvae of ghost moths have been an essential part of the Aboriginal diet for centuries. The grubs are dug from the gum tree roots and eaten live or barbecued. They are rich in protein and would make a nutritious source if you're lost in the bush.

Supermarkets even have them in soup tins.

#### Thailand, Laos and Cambodia

Walk the markets of these countries and you will be greeted by street vendors selling an amazing variety of fried insects as

These orders of insects are commonly found: odonata (damselflies and dragonflies), orthoptera (crickets, grasshoppers, katydids), mantodea (mantids), isoptera (termites), hemiptera (water bugs, cicadas, backswimmers), lepidoptera (silkworm moths are popular), coleoptera (weevils, wood-boring beetles, diving beetles) and hymenoptera



Red ant eggs Serving size: 100g

Amount per serving Calories: 83 Total Fat: 3.2g Phosphorus: 113mg Iron: 4mg Calcium: 8mg Carbohydrate: 6.5g Protein: 7g

(bees, ants, wasps). Some restaurants serve insects as part of their regular menu as well.

## China

Chinese people are known to eat "anything that moves" so finding locals delighting in insect snacks and delicacies shouldn't come as a surprise. Just head to a local street market such as the one in Tianjin, Hangzhou, Canton or the Wangfujing Night Market in Beijing for a weird and wonderful array. Silkworm cocoons, cicada larvae, fried locusts, crickets and grasshoppers and eightlegged critters such as scorpions, tarantulas and spiders are a common

## **South Korea**

Beondegi or silkworm pupae is a popular snack for South Koreans. They can be bought on the street, are served in bars and restaurants as appetisers, and are even canned. Beondegi can be eaten boiled. steamed, stewed or stir-fried.

The Japanese have been eating insects for centuries, especially aquatic insects which were an important source of protein. Restaurants in Tokyo and many parts of Japan still offer various insectbased dishes such as hachinoko (boiled bee larvae), Inago no Tsukudani (stewed grasshoppers or locusts in sweet soy sauce), zazamushi (aquatic insect larvae) semi (fried cicadas) and sangi (silkworm pupae; known as beondegi in Korea).

## Columbia

Hormigas culonas, literally "bigbutt ants" in Spanish, is a prized delicacy in Columbia. These leaf-cutter ants are aptly named because of their large lower abdomen. Only the young queens and drones are harvested in the Santander region in spring after the rainy season when they surface to establish their own ant colonies. The ants are roasted and eaten as snacks, a favourite for moviegoers and as bar snacks.



Small grasshopper Serving size: 100g

Giant water bug Serving size: 100g

Amount per serving Calories: 62 Total Fat: 8.3g Phosphorus: 226mg

Calcium: 44mg Carbohydrate: 2.1g

Iron: 14mg

Protein: 19.8g

Amount per serving Calories: 153 Total Fat: 6.1g Phosphorus: 238mg Iron: 5mg Calcium: 35mg Carbohydrate: 3.9g Protein: 20.6g

Cricket Serving size: 100g

Amount per serving Calories: 122 Total Fat: 5.5g Phosphorus: 185mg Iron: 10mg Calcium: 76mg Carbohydrate: 5.1g Protein: 12.9g

Termites and palm grubs are popular edible insects as well.

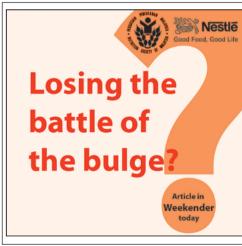
## **Mexico**

The agave worm, also known as the maguey worm, is the worm you find in tequila bottles. They are also eaten roasted. fried. cooked inside a tortilla or as part of a recipe for a meal. Chapulines or fried grasshoppers are a common snack that can be found commercially canned and sold in supermarkets and local grocery stores. Ants, rich in thiamine and riboflavin, are consumed both in egg form and as adults.

Ant eggs, which are common in Mexican markets, are often cooked in butter and served in tacos. Ant larvae are canned and exported as gourmet food.

# **Africa**

In Africa, many tribes eat insects like termites, grasshoppers, caterpillars, palm weevil larvae, beetles, ants and locusts. The wings of the



termites are removed before roasting or being fried.

Guts of crickets and grasshoppers are removed before frying. Locusts are typically boiled and salted prior to eating Another widely eat insect is the westwood larvae, a caterpillar known as kanni. They are boiled and dried in the sun before being eaten or used as an ingredient in vegetable soup.

Another larvae, the palm weevil larva, is a large insect that is fleshy and grub-like with a high fat content. They are collected from the trunks of palm trees and fried. An even larger insect, the compost beetle larvae, can be found in garbage, manure piles or swampy areas. The lower abdomen containing the guts is removed before washing and frying. Some refuse to eat them because they are taken from "dirty" places.

