



Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects and the Last Great Hope to Save the Planet

Daniella Martin

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects and the Last Great Hope to Save the Planet

Daniella Martin

Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects and the Last Great Hope to Save the Planet Daniella Martin

Insects. They're what's for dinner. Can you imagine a world in which that simple statement is not only true but in fact an unremarkable part of daily life? Daniella Martin, entomophagist and blogger, can.

In this rollicking excursion into the world of edible insects, Martin takes us to the front lines of the next big trend in the global food movement and shows us how insects just might be the key to solving world hunger. Along the way, we sample moth larvae tacos at the Don Bugito food cart in San Francisco, travel to Copenhagen to meet the experimental tasters at Noma's Nordic Food Lab, gawk at the insects stocked in the frozen food aisle at Thailand's Costco, and even crash an underground bug-eating club in Tokyo.

Martin argues that bugs have long been an important part of indigenous diets and cuisines around the world, and investigates our own culture's bias against their use as a food source. She shines a light on the cutting-edge research of Marcel Dicke and other scientists who are only now beginning to determine the nutritional makeup of insects and champion them as an efficient and sustainable food source.

Whether you love or hate bugs, Edible will radically change the way you think about the global food crisis and perhaps persuade you that insects are much more than a common pest. For the adventurous, the book includes an illustrated list of edible insects, recipes, and instructions on how to raise bugs at home.

Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects and the Last Great Hope to Save the Planet Details

Date : Published February 11th 2014 by New Harvest (first published February 4th 2014)


ISBN : 9780544114357

Author : Daniella Martin

Format : Hardcover 272 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Food and Drink, Food, Environment, Travel, Science, Health

 [Download Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects a ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects and the Last Great Hope to Save the Planet Daniella Martin

From Reader Review Edible: An Adventure into the World of Eating Insects and the Last Great Hope to Save the Planet for online ebook

David says

Some notes from an outsider who has lived in the Asian bug-eating zone for quite some time and has made peace with it:

– On page 177, Martin says that the food the Thai call *kai mot daeng* (transliterated in the inadequate Wikipedia entry as “*khai mot daeng*”) is the larvae of ants. Thai people told me they are the eggs of ants. The inadequate Wikipedia entry says they are the eggs and pupae of ants. (This led me to realize that I did not know the difference between pupae and larvae. That's a digression, but in case your education is as woefully inadequate as mine, there's an explanation here.)

Whatever they are, however they're spelled, what I will call “ants' eggs” are the gateway drug of bug-eating. Just like some sort of entomophagical equivalent to “Reefer Madness”, I (naive and trusting) was slipped some ants' eggs by a friendly-looking stranger, and I haven't looked back. The stranger did not tell me what I was eating, which was probably just as well, as my first reaction might have been to declare that I never ate anything that's been up some ant's butt. Having been tricked into a taste, however, I got interested, esp. as it seemed strange that tiny ants could produce the white-bean-looking egg that I had ingested. Then I got to SE Asia and I saw the creepy big size of the reddish yellow monsters (did I mention that they also move really quickly?) called “red ants” in Thailand. I understood that eating their potential offspring was not just delicious, it was also a solemn responsibility to keep the numbers these nightmarish members of the genus *Oecophylla* to a manageable level.

Ants' eggs are also delicious in soup.

– The author spends some time in Thailand and writes a little about the effects of modernity on bug-eating, for example, citing an interesting-sounding but unfootnoted study that said “...when a village got TV the residents gradually stopped eating insects” (p. 165). My experience as an English teacher at an Thai urban university with a largely rural student body was that bug-eating definitely separated those who had grown up in the countryside from their urban-raised colleagues. In fact, the merits, pro- and con-, of ants' eggs and other rural delicacies was one of the few areas where my Thai students (otherwise an extremely conflict-averse group) would raise their voices and advocate, often to the point of sputtering to a halt as the strength of their opinion overtook their ability to express themselves in a foreign language. The bug-eaters, usually ethnic Lao from the *Isaan* region of northeast Thailand, gave as good as they got and they made clear that they would not be categorized as country yokels because they ate bugs. In fact, they often chided their urban colleagues for their narrow-mindedness in this regard. So I don't think that bug-eating, in southeast Asia anyway, is in any danger of dying out due to social stigma, or any other reason, for that matter. But as the West is still (inexplicably) held in high esteem, having the endorsement of bearded hipsters may prompt the urban cohort to get with the program.

– There's no denying the “yuck” factor. I read in this book of the San Francisco food trucks that serve edible bugs rolled inside a soft taco or the like and I said, “Yeah, I wish they had that here”, meaning Vietnam, my current home. If you don't look at them, bugs are easy to get down, often (as the author often points out) indistinguishable from more traditional delicious food. But here at the Highway 4 restaurant in downtown Hanoi, they will gleefully slap an undisguised dish of fried crickets in front of you. Since I am a large and ungainly Westerner, and never used chopsticks until adulthood, I have to take a good long look at their

lightly-breaded bodies supine while I attempt to daintily pick one off the plate with these woefully inadequate utensils and attempt to guide it to my mouth without an intermediate stop on my shirt-front. Ditto for the fried bees I recently had on a trip north of the capital. They were delicious, but the gag reflex made an appearance if I gazed upon them too long. We need an international aid effort, perhaps with military personnel pushing palates of soft tacos out of the back of low-flying planes.

– A good book. In the back, not only are there loads of recipes, but also instructions to begin raising edible bugs in your own home! Even if you never actually plan to start a mealworm ranch in your spare closet, you can torment the Long-Suffering Wife by threatening to renew interest in same if L-S W. does not get her compulsive purchasing of footwear under control. Rarely does modern non-fiction present the reader with vistas of potential chaotic mischief as this one does.

Nancy O says

This is an absorbing, enlightening, and entertaining look into the world of entomophagy. I'm ready to try cricket-based protein bars and fried mealworms. The book was written by an extremely knowledgeable anthropologist whose foray into eating bugs occurred when she was a grad student in Mexico. The world is starving; bugs are plentiful and make up earth's largest biomass, and are much easier to farm than livestock. I'm headed to Petco tomorrow for some mealworms.

Atila Iamarino says

O tema é muito legal, curti a ideia de que comer insetos é uma das soluções pro impacto que estamos causando. Fiquei curioso para experimentar, recomendo para quem se interessa também. Até aí o livro é excelente. Mas é um argumento que se desenrola muito mais rapidamente do que um livro demanda. O resultado são páginas e páginas descrevendo como são os insetos que ela comeu e onde. Também deu uma escurregada nas explicações científicas de alguns conceitos.

Arash Kamangir says

Verbose. Could have been a great 10 page article.

Amber says

It was a surprisingly fun read. I want to eat bugs.....now! I appreciate and enjoy the pandora station she recommended in a side note.

Rebecca says

Yes, that's right: this is a book about eating insects (entomophagy, if we're being fancy). And not only does

it carry a very important message to a world in food crisis, it's also a delightful read. Like my very favorite nonfiction (such as Donovan Hohn's *Moby-Duck*, for instance), it combines many different genres: history, travel, nature, food, and environmental politics, plus a little bit of memoir thrown in – all delivered with a lighthearted, self-deprecating touch.

So, why eat bugs (plus bees, beetles, spiders, grasshoppers, and so on)?

- **Insects are the largest animal biomass on earth, and raising them – even on factory farming levels – is markedly clean and efficient.** There are over seven billion people on this earth who need feeding, but increasing the scale of industrial farming is no solution; this would only accelerate the rise in greenhouse gases. Martin gives a great illustration of the problem in Chapter One, when she imagines what would happen if McDonald's had to give every customer the material impact of their food, too. So along with that burger you'd get four pounds of manure, a thousand gallons of filthy water, a gallon of carbon emissions, and a nice helping of methane gas. Insects, on the other hand, have minimal byproducts; a similar serving size would produce half a pound of castings (excreta) and ten gallons of cloudy water.
- **People around the world (especially in Asia, Africa, and South America) have been eating insects for millennia.** And before that, many of our primate ancestors, such as tarsiers, were also primarily insectivorous. Bug-eating may well be the true "Paleo diet."
- **Insects are high in protein, iron, essential fatty acids, and other vitamins.** Crickets have more than three times the calcium of ground beef; soldier fly larvae contain more than six times the iron of a comparable serving of chicken.
- **And, according to Daniella Martin, insects taste pretty darn good, too.** Her favorite dish is wax moth larvae tacos, but she also especially recommends bees, wasps, and bamboo worms. One of her signature recipes is a fig, goat cheese and grasshopper amuse-bouche she calls her "Circle of Life Canapé". Most of the time, though, it seems insects are just served fried. Pretty much anything tastes good when fried, so this makes sense. The other way you're likely to find them is toasted and ground up into flour, to provide nutritious bulk.

Of course, some bugs are an acquired taste. I can't quite imagine the taste of a giant water bug, which Martin describes as "banana-infused anchovies soaked in old perfume." And she does warn that if you have a shellfish allergy, you likely won't be able to eat insects either, because of their close relation. Similarly, if you are allergic to bee stings, don't attempt to eat bees. Some people are allergic to cockroaches, too, apparently – *but how would you ever know before trying them?*

Martin first learned about eating bugs while performing anthropological research in Mexico. Over the course of this book she travels to New Orleans, Denmark (where she meets some of the masterminds behind Noma, one of the most famous restaurants in the world), Japan, Thailand, and Cambodia (fried tarantula, yum!).

But why eat bugs at all? Why not just be vegetarian? Well, for one thing, consuming milk and other dairy products buys into the meat machine anyway (something has to be done with all those unwanted male calves produced by the dairy industry). Why not veganism, then? I think many would contest Martin on this point, but she argues that veganism is not a natural diet, evolution considered. Also, modern-day veganism requires a lot of (often expensive) products that can't be grown very sustainably, like soy beans. Agriculture is also limited in certain climates. Whereas insects are out there for the taking, or the farming, in both the Western and the developing world, and offer an intense burst of protein.

So how can we get people to put insects on the menu? Even though Martin provides tips for raising your own crickets or mealworms at home, I seriously doubt many people will take her up on the idea. Nor am I likely

to place a bulk order for creatures that are usually just reptile feed. I think restaurants and TV chefs have to set the trend. And, at least for newbies, disguising insects may well be the key to getting people to try them. Whole fried cricket, down the hatch? Not so sure. Ground-up cricket in a peanut butter and chocolate protein bar? Why not?

“We are running out of options and have exhausted our alternatives. We need an idea with legs. Insects have six of them.” I must admit, Martin has convinced me. If you’ll excuse me, I’m off to research the local availability of Chapul (cricket) granola bars.

Daniella’s website

Sophie says

I haven’t had this much fun reading non-fiction... EVER. **Edible** is funny and engaging, and I would totally credit my first bug-eating experience to this book if I hadn’t already eaten that chocolate-covered bug in my college psychology class (mmmm!). Martin’s informal style and witty humor is a much welcomed addition to the non-fiction world, and I’m positive that I would have had the same amount of fun if she’d written about quantum physics or contemporary art (or any other subject that I normally balk at). But long story short: bugs are awesome and yummy! Give them (and your stomach) a chance!

Introduction

Daniella Martin ate her first bug (roasted grasshoppers!) in Mexico while doing her BA in cultural anthropology. Although she wasn’t too impressed with how it tasted, Martin was fascinated by the nutritional, environmental, and economical benefits of eating bugs. From visiting insect farms to dining with insect-eating experts to hosting bar-bug-cues (grilled shish kebabs, anyone?), Martin provides compelling evidence in support of eating bugs. **Edible** also includes useful information such as “How to Raise Bugs at Home,” “The Essential List of Edible Insects,” and “Delectable Edible Insect Recipes” for those who want to go all out after reading this book.

Discussion

Martin is a great storyteller – she talks to you like a friend would, with all the excitement of having discovered something really cool and awesome. She’s an unlikely participant in the bug-eating deal, though, which makes **Edible** that much more compelling.

Despite my love of intensely flavored foods, I am a cautious person, a bit of a hypochondriac, and gastrointestinally sensitive. I’m allergic to alcohol and lactose intolerant, and breakfast cereal has been known to give me a stomachache.

Even though Martin considers herself cautious, she doesn’t seem to be from all the experiences she’s shared in this book. She touches bugs willingly, for one – I think there are a lot of people who shudder just at the thought of bugs, myself included. (I’ve talked about creating a bug-specific exterminator previously where I can get rid of bugs in my house just by the press of a button.)

Oh, how times have changed: When an early female hominid saw a bug and shrieked, it was in excitement, because hey, lunch.

Edible has a go-with-the-flow feel to it; Martin states the problems the human race is facing right now in regards to running out of food and land and pretty much everything else, but the rest of the chapters jump around through a bunch of different topics. What ties the book together is Martin’s entertaining voice and great analogies. This girl makes science fun!

Nutrition is sort of like money: If leaves represent dollar bills, fruits are fives, nuts are tens, and insects, and other forms of animal flesh, are crisp hundred-dollar bills.

And there's so much useful information in **Edible** that leaves you with no excuses to not start raising, cooking, and eating bugs. Martin provides a nutritional table comparing nutrients in bugs versus different kinds of meat, and I was definitely surprised by how nutrient-dense bugs are. I was also very surprised by many other facts that Martin pull out. If I learned absolutely nothing from this book, I'd still remember that honey is really bee-vomit. Oh, and that my beloved peanut butter has insect fragments in it. (So does yours, by the way. But your peanut butter is really my peanut butter, so...)

Conclusion

Overall, **Edible** does a great job at showcasing the benefits of eating bugs without coming off as desperate or demanding. Martin's writing style is entertaining and makes this information-dense book a really fun read. I would recommend this book to anyone who's even a little teeny weeny bit curious about eating bugs, because **Edible** is truly mind-opening.

Paper Breathers (Book Reviews & Discussions)

Peta says

A quick entertaining read. I like that it included a section on how to grow your own and a few recipes.

Science For The People says

Featured on Science for the People show #284 on September 26, 2014, during an interview with author Daniella Martin. <http://www.scienceforthepeople.ca/epi...>

Michael Ronn says

Non-fiction at its finest

I enjoyed this book. It reminded me of Michael Pollan's books, which I love. The author makes a compelling case for eating insects, and she definitely changed my perceptions. But what I loved most was her writing style. It's just beautiful, and I don't say that about much nonfiction. Not only does she make a compelling case, she does it in such a writerly way that's worth reading in and of itself. My only suggestion was that the chapters seemed to lose focus at times, jumping from story to story in a way that was sometimes jarring. I think better paragraphing would have eliminated this, as some of the sections could have been broken up a bit. But that is nitpicky, and it shouldn't stop you from buying. It's definitely worth reading.

mismamari says

Fast read but wow! Lots of entertaining information and travel adventures. I wish there were more travel stories instead of big recipes in the last few sections of the book. The recipes in this book would be better

served as a companion bug cook book.

Eric says

Lots of convincing and inspiring stories that we should consider eating bugs as a nutritional, delicious, economical, and green alternative to meat. I'd eat bugs.

Becky says

My only problem with this book was that it ended. I actually think that I could have spent another ten or 20 hours listening to the author travel around the world and try bugs, describe the way in which cultures eat/view them, and the way they are being sustainably raised. There were so many times that I wish she had gone more in depth, but if she had, it might have started to get too pedantic. Overall, I just loved it, she writes and narrates with enthusiasm and comes off as very genuine.

So am I going to start eating bugs? Logically, rationally, the whole time I listened to the author I was thinking "Yeah! Awesome! I'm right there with you!" But my terrible, illogical heart looks at one picture of meal worms on a salad and suddenly I am screaming inside. Eating bugs is a great idea! They are full of vitamins and proteins, they are way easier on the environment and more sustainable to raise than livestock, and everyone says they're objectively delicious (everyone being the author, other authors, Anthony Bourdain, and a bunch of my friends who turn out to have eaten bugs). On top of that, I love going into the woods and finding things. I like the idea of tracking down and hunting junebugs or crickets, and foraging. I want to try. I am going to make an honest effort. I think that if I can put them into food where I cannot tell that they are bugs WHILE I am eating them I will be fine, and maybe someday can break into eating them when I can see them.

So meatless Mondays are a go... and insect Tuesdays may be coming soon.

Benjamin Rothman says

This was interesting from both a culinary standpoint and anthropological standpoint. Discovering how we are the "weird" ones in the world (and by "We" I am talking in general about Western Culture) who don't actually use in any way, insect protein in our diets whereas plenty of cultures around the world have and do. And, these cultures are at least as "civilized" as our own, so it's not just a case of "they are primitive and we are not" in reality when it is exactly that in our societal perceptions.

I'm not advocating the widespread adoption of entomophagia - I've eaten a few bugs in survival courses and the like and they were literally and figuratively hard to swallow - but it is a well thought out discussion on how to use existing limited resources to adequately feed a growing world population. There are plenty of reasons why it makes sense and even a discussion about why, in the west, we are just so put off by the thought of eating bugs.

There are actually some recipes in the book. Fortunately, fewer of them than I expected because as much as I like both food and cooking, I might have been tempted to try one as a challenge.

In one aspect, it was not as scholarly as I had expected. But in retrospect, I actually think that worked for the author because its conversational tone made the whole subject much more approachable.

Anameeka says

This was an absolutely fascinating book. I was surprised to find out bugs are actually full of nutrients, particularly proteins, omegas, and certain minerals and vitamins, depending on the bug. I had thought that lobsters, crab, and shrimp are bugs of the sea and was surprised to find that I was correct. Martin is not advocating that we get rid of our favorite foods, but rather supplementing them with insects, with are plentiful, easy to grow and harvest, beneficial to the environment and surprisingly tasty. Given our limited resources of water, carbon-dioxide sucking forests, and ever growin populations, we need more efficient food sources than our favorite cattle and pork.

Besides, humans have always eaten bugs, and we all know the jokes about bug parts in our peanut butter or hot dogs are true, we just don't like to admit it. She asks with all the strange food we eat, why do westerners find bugs so repulsive? It all boils down to cultural mores of what is acceptable to eat. Jello, anyone? (Really, think about what it is made of)

She delves into these questions and offers many effective rebuttals. Martin states that we need to change adult westerners' perspective regarding entophagy, the consumption of insects. The book made me think about why I dislike bugs so much. For me, it is partially because, I live where fewer bugs are, and also the creepy crawly factor. Something about things that skitter in my peripheral vision.

I was delighted to find a local connection. As I live next to one of the largest inland salt water seas, I knew that the indigenous tribes had eaten insects before they were "civilized". My history text had a distainful aside to that effect. Instead, these peoples should have been celebrated for finding an easy, nutritional, and tasty food source in an area where food is scarce. Perhaps the Mormon settlers should have been eating those Mormon crickets, to supplement and save their traditional crops. It would have been so much easier for them to send gathering parties of children to pick up the already roasted, salted, and dried crickets from the shores of the Great Salt Lake. I need a substitute for popcorn. I wonder how these would taste?

I decided that I approve of eating bugs, as long as I don't have to raise the bugs myself. Please, just ship me cricket or mealworm flour, then maybe I can graduate to roasted crickets or grasshoppers. For the brave and adventurous, tried and true recipes are included. Meanwhile, I am delighted to find that Chulpas energy bars are sold in my local store. I intend to try some soon.
