

Bugs as Food



▲ worms at Thongkuean market, Chiang Mai, Thailand

I am sitting in an expensive New York restaurant and I read the menu. I can't believe my eyes! Chocolate-covered crickets. Yuck! I can also order Ant Egg Soup or Silkworm Fried Rice. And it's expensive—\$25 for 5 crickets!

I don't like the idea of eating insects. However, in many countries insects are not **luxury** food. They are part of an everyday diet. In Thailand, open-air markets sell silkworms and grasshoppers. Movie theaters in South America sell roasted ants as snacks instead of popcorn.

I am probably eating insects without knowing it, anyway. "It's estimated that the average human eats half a kilogram of insects each year, **unintentionally**," says Lisa Monachelli, director of youth and family programs at New Canaan Nature Center in Connecticut. "For example, in the United States, chocolate can have up to 60 bits of bugs (like



▲ roasted insects—Bangkok

legs and heads) per 100 grams. Tomato sauce can contain 30 fly eggs per 100 grams and peanut butter can have 30 insect bits per 100 grams."

Well, if I am eating insects anyway . . . I decide to order the chocolate covered crickets and hey, they taste good.



▲ boy eating insects