

Reading skills practice: The world's weirdest food – exercises

How hungry would you have to be to eat a brain sandwich? What about some fried spider? Read this to find out about the world's weirdest food.

Preparation

Match the unusual food with the country, and write a–f next to the numbers 1–6. If you don't know, have a guess!

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1..... USA | a. Horse milk beer |
| 2..... Japan | b. Brain sandwiches |
| 3..... The Philippines | c. Jellied moose nose |
| 4..... Norway | d. Duck egg (with embryo inside) |
| 5..... Mongolia | e. Smoked sheep's head |
| 6..... Canada | f. Tuna eyeball |



It's hard to say what is normal and what is weird where food is concerned – it all depends on the taste of the individual and which part of the world you come from. One person's nightmare is another person's delicacy. Here are a few of the strangest (or most normal) types of food from around the world.

Haggis (Scotland) A world-famous dish, haggis is made from the parts of a sheep many people would throw away. The heart, lungs and liver are mixed together with onion, spices and oatmeal, then put inside a sheep's stomach and boiled for three hours.



Brain sandwiches (USA) These are not as common as they were in the past, but in parts of Ohio you can still get fried brains served on hamburger buns. Brains don't have much flavour, so you eat the sandwiches with plenty of sauce.

Insects (Asia, Africa and South America) Many insects are high in protein and contain important fatty acids and vitamins. In Thailand it's common to find fried grasshoppers, crickets, scorpions and worms on sale in the street. In Cambodia fried tarantula are a delicacy; people eat the legs two at a time.



Hakarl (Iceland) This has been described as the most disgusting food ever. Made by fermenting a Greenland or Basking shark for two to four months, hakarl smells of ammonia (like the bleach used for cleaning). It is available all year round in Icelandic stores and often served in cubes on toothpicks.

Sannakji (Korea) Now that Japanese sushi is popular all over the world, many people are used to eating raw fish. But this Korean delicacy is quite different, since the seafood isn't dead. Sannakji consists of baby octopus which are sliced up while alive; the tentacles are still wriggling about when the dish is served. If you don't chew the octopus carefully, there's a real danger that the tiny suction cups can stick to your mouth and throat and choke you.



Fugu (Japan) Fugu is the famous Japanese puffer fish, filled with enough of the poison tetrodotoxin to be lethal. Chefs have to be trained for two to three years before they can prepare the fish. Fugu actually tastes quite bland; the excitement is in surviving the experience of eating it.

Casu Marzu (Italy) More live food, this time from Sardinia in Italy. Casu marzu is a cheese made with fly larvae, or maggots, to promote a level of fermentation that is close to decomposition. It is traditionally served with live insect larvae still inside. The tiny, translucent worms can jump 15 cm if disturbed, so many people prefer to brush them off before trying the smelly cheese.

1. Check your understanding: matching

Read the questions and write the correct part of the world.

Scotland	USA	Japan	Italy
Iceland (x2)	Korea	Asia, Africa and South America	

Which part of the world ...

- ... has a dish which is not that tasty, but offers the diner a thrill of danger? _____
- ... eats an animal which is cut up into pieces while still alive? _____
- ... gets valuable nutrition from eating small creatures? _____
- ... offers a dish that probably needs lots of ketchup? _____
- ... eats a fish that has undergone a period of chemical change? _____
- ... likes a dairy product that houses some baby insects? _____
- ... doesn't waste much of the animal when they produce a well-known local dish? _____
- ... eats chunks of food on small wooden sticks? _____

2. Check your vocabulary: gap fill

Complete the gaps with a verb from the box.

jump	mix	slice	chew
wriggle	disturb	choke	boil

- To make haggis, you _____ the heart, lungs and liver with the other ingredients, put it inside a sheep's stomach and _____ it for three hours.
- In Korea, they _____ up the baby octopus and serve the tentacles as they continue to _____ around.
- You have to be careful to _____ the tentacles fully, to make sure they don't stick in your throat and _____ you.
- The tiny worms in Casu Marzu cheese can _____ 15 cm if you _____ them.

Discussion

Which of the foods mentioned would you be willing to try?

What's the weirdest food you've ever eaten?