

Should more people eat insects?

Billions of people eat insects, but some don't want to include them in their diet.

What you need to know

- As the world's population increases, it is becoming more important to find sustainable sources of food.
- Sustainability means using natural resources in a way that means they won't run out.
- Meat production harms the environment. Cattle produce methane, a gas that contributes to global warming, and huge swathes of land are turned into pasture so that livestock can graze.
- In some countries, insects are a common source of protein, an essential nutrient for the body. Last year, pupils at a north London school enjoyed an insect lunch as part of their food and nutrition class.

TASTY TREATS
Scorpions, which are eaten in China, are said to taste slightly fishy. Tarantulas, enjoyed in Cambodia and other countries, apparently taste like crab, and stink bugs reward those who can get past the smell with a delicate apple flavour.



Since 1900 the Earth's population has ballooned from 1.64 billion to around 7.6 billion. Improved medical treatment, among other factors, has led to more people surviving childhood than at any point in history. With the rise in population comes a problem: how to feed all these people. Meat is an important part of many people's diet, but farming animals causes terrible damage to the environment. Cows release methane, a gas that contributes to global warming, and forests are destroyed to make way for pastures where animals can graze. Some say we need to embrace entomophagy (eating insects) if we're going to save the planet. It might sound awful, but bugs have been a part of the human diet for thousands of years. Could you eat them?

Yes – grubs make great grub

Around two billion people around the world regularly eat insects as a source of protein; there's nothing weird about it. Beef might make great burgers, but it's costly and environmentally unfriendly to produce. Cows can be fed seven kilograms of food for every one kilo of beef they produce, but crickets only need to be fed two kilos – and they're more nutritious, too. Insects contain more protein and vitamins than many meats, as well as less fat. Bugs might seem like a disgusting thing to eat, but society's tastes can change. Once, the idea of eating raw fish was alien to the UK but now sushi is widely available. The fact is, we need to embrace eating insects for the benefit of the environment and ourselves.

No – insects are icky

Most people find the thought of eating insects unpleasant. Why should people be encouraged to do something that disgusts them? Meat is delicious, and there's simply no way a bug burger could taste as good as a hamburger. Besides, there's already an environmentally friendly diet that doesn't involve creepy-crawlies: vegetarianism. There's no need to grind up bugs to make our bread when we can just enjoy fruit, grains, nuts and vegetables instead. The idea of making bugs a big part of peoples' diet is risky. For example, if bugs are on the school lunch menu, children may well turn up their noses and decide to go hungry instead. What good could possibly come of putting pupils off their food?

YES

Three reasons why more people should eat insects.

- 1 People eat insects in 80% of the world's countries; there's nothing weird about it.
- 2 Insects are far more nutritious than meat. Most contain more protein and vitamins and less fat.
- 3 Insects are cheap to produce and farming them causes less damage to the environment.

NO

Three reasons why more people shouldn't eat insects.

- 1 People in other countries may eat insects, but no one should be encouraged to eat something they don't want to.
- 2 Meat is delicious; there's no way a bug burger tastes as good as a hamburger.
- 3 There are other environmentally friendly options. Why risk putting people off their food?

THE WEEKLY POLL

To find out what everyone is voting on this week visit:
theweekjunior.co.uk/polls

YES

NO



What do you think?

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