

# YUCK! THAT'S NOT GOING IN MY MOUTH!

Are you one of those adventurous types who will dare to pop all manner of new foods into your mouth? I know there are lots of you out there, but I am not one of your ranks. For me, I like food to be commonplace and recognizable. The thought of travelling to foreign lands strikes me as the same thing as a very sparse diet. Just how many meal replacements can I pack into my suitcases? With today's airport security, not many, especially the liquid ones.

My aversion to trying new foods came at an early age when my mother introduced me to her culinary delights. Not a label I would have given them for sure. Maybe the mistake I made was in asking the origin of these delights before tasting them. No. I still wouldn't have liked tripe. For those of you who don't know what that is, according to the dictionary, it is "the first and second divisions of the stomach of a ruminant, esp. oxen, sheep, or goats, used as food." Yuck!

As if that doesn't sound bad enough, you should see what it looks like. First of all, it is beige in colour. Covered with a beige sauce it is most unattractive on one's plate. It is also weird to look at. Where a honeycomb looks the same from the bottom as the top, this doesn't. The top is honeycomb-like but it has a flat bottom. Actually, it has a cellular design and one might say it looks "fleshy" or skin-like. As for honey, forget it. It just tastes, hmmm, beige.

Now if that doesn't turn you off, let me tell you what it was like to eat it. First, it was hard to cut a small piece off the larger piece: seemed rubbery somehow. Then once in the mouth it seemed spongy. I could chew and chew and chew and chew. Then just when I thought I had it ready to swallow, I was wrong. Part of it would start down the esophagus and there would be a long stringy piece still attached to the rest in my mouth. Disgusting. I sure hope you aren't reading this at the table!

Such foods were not uncommon at my house, albeit this was almost the worst. I think Sweetbreads...the thymus glands and/or pancreas of calves, lambs and piglets under one year old... were actually the worst to look at but I never did get those into my mouth. There are some things that no amount of cajoling will get me to do. Add stuffed heart and kidneys to the diet and perhaps some of you will understand why I'd rather have dessert than the entre.

Like most teens, I developed a strategy to avoid that which I did not like: dinner. After-school visits to my friends often provided me with all manner of delectable treats which sated me long before I ever got home to our evening meal. The thought of my arriving home in a ravenous state was something to be feared. Now, this preference for dessert is the root of my insufferable sweet tooth.

When raising my own children, it was easy for me to find mealtimes very enjoyable. I only cooked what I liked. I realize that in some ways it was quite unfair to them but until

they knew it, I was safe. Not being a tomato eater, I enjoyed many restaurant meals with well-behaved children after a simple promise of giving them all the tomatoes in my salads. These young ones have now grown, travelled the world and thoroughly enjoy many culinary delights which show up on their tables when I visit. Yuck!

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