

Bugs for dinner? New Aussie food trend has legs (and wings)

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Fried crickets, roasted cockroach, honey-flavoured ants, mealworm and chocolate coated popcorn are now available to try and buy in Australia's cities—and while the cuisine remains a novelty, there are signs it is growing in popularity

With a twist of lime and a dash of salt Sydney chef Nowshad Alam Rasel flavours a hot pan full of crickets, tossing them over a flaming stove.

The savoury snack, which would not be out of place at a Mexican cantina or a Bangkok street stall, is creeping onto menus at Australian boutique eateries such as El Topo, challenging the inhibitions of diners.

"When they come for the first time, the customer very much wants to know what it is," says sous-chef Rasel, as he neatly plates up the fried critters, topped with slices of fresh chilli.

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Consumer attitude toward eating insects are usually split explains Skye Blackburn, owner of Australia's largest insect supplier, the Edible Bug Shop in Sydney.

"The first kind of people are completely grossed out and they really can't change their mind and they kind of just want to come and have a look and don't want to try it really," the entomologist says.

"And then we get the second kind of people that really want to learn more and some of them will try edible insects and some of them won't, but they will go away and talk about insects and they'll spread the word about what they have seen that day," she adds.

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