

DON'T EGG ME ON

By Fred Hobbs

The list of favorite foods may be as diverse as the population. Feel free to enjoy what is most pleasing to your palate. Meantime, I wish to ignore the advice in a 1940s popular song to “Accentuate the Positive and Eliminate the Negative” and explore the most unpopular, even “yukky” edibles cited among Americans. The list is by no means inclusive and specifically excludes exotic dishes from foreign lands that most Yanks have just never learned to appreciate. The overwhelming “un-favorite” (cited by 51 percent in one survey) is liver.

Personally, my taste buds find it not half-bad if cooked properly (not like shoe leather), slathered with onions and topped with bacon. (Maybe that’s cheating!)

Other commonly-mentioned disliked menu items are lima beans, mushrooms, buttermilk and Spam®, a trade name used generically to describe various forms of canned meat and first introduced to GIs in World War II.

Topping my personal list, and known to be loathed by many, but present on every breakfast menu in the nation, the egg. From my earliest days, I have had a distinct dislike for the smell, appearance and especially taste of the common chicken egg. My mother found out this aversion quite dramatically. The first time she tried to feed me an egg (I think soft boiled), she says I scooped it up and aimed at her face. Several future periodic attempts resulted in the same reaction and at some point she determined the effort was hopeless.

Somewhat in a cadence used by Dr. Suess, regarding eggs, I don’t like them fried, I don’t like them scrambled, I don’t like them boiled, I don’t like them hard, I don’t like them soft, I don’t like them poached, I don’t like them deviled. I don’t like green eggs, with or without ham. I don’t like omelets. I can’t stand quiche, (of course I’m a man and not supposed to like quiche anyway.) I don’t like eggs!

Now, you’re not going to let me get by without asking some questions, so like being in a “Jeopardy” game, I will go ahead and give you answers. No, I am not allergic to eggs. So says my doctor who has successfully given me flu shots over several years. Yes, I eat such goodies as cake, bread, rolls, waffles and pancakes which are most often prepared using eggs. In fact, I enjoy several dishes in which the egg is in there but the sights, tastes, texture and smells are absent, blended in with more pleasant ingredients. I also enjoy the meat of the animal that produces eggs. Fried, baked or barbecued chicken is great.

As the fates provided, at one point, I had to deal with eggs in their original forms daily. This was a part of my youthful experiences. To earn my room and board at the University of Colorado, I was hired as a cook in the biggest girls dormitory on campus.

Would I cook lunch? No. Would I be on the dinner-time shift? No. I was assigned to the early morning crew, a breakfast cook. And what was the main staple of the breakfast diet for the co-eds? Why, eggs of course. Over that year, I dutifully prepared hundreds of eggs, thousands of eggs. Two options, fried or scrambled. I learned a shallow breathing technique in order to tolerate the smell. I even learned to crack two eggs at a time, one in each hand, a talent I have scarcely used since.

The best thing about that experience was that I didn't have to eat my prepared creations. After my shift was over, I would often pull a pork chop or a beef steak from the cooler and throw one on the grill. My kind of breakfast!

And that's more than enough of my egg-centricities. I'm certain you won't egg me on to tell you more.