Roasted guinea pig and fried spiders are on display at new food museum
By Agence France-Presse, adapted by Newsela staff
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Would you like some maggot cheese, fried tarantula or a bat? Or how about fried locusts, grasshoppers or rotten sea herring?

These delicacies are among some 80 items featured at the Disgusting Food Museum that opened in Los Angeles, California, on Sunday. The museum's aim is to expose visitors to different cultures and foods and what we may all be eating in the future.

Samuel West is the museum's founder. He said he came up with the idea for the two-month exhibit in light of the ongoing debate about environmentally sustainable sources of protein. Another worry is food security, or having access to healthy and affordable food.

The exhibit first opened in West's native country of Sweden in October.

"If we can change people's notions of disgust, maybe we can also open them up to new sustainable proteins," said West. He pointed to platefuls of Iru locust beans eaten in Nigeria and mopane worms eaten in South Africa. Then there's Nsenene, which are grasshoppers, considered a delicacy in Uganda.

Super Stinky Delicacies

The entrance ticket to the museum in downtown Los Angeles is a vomit bag. The idea is that visitors can use it if any of the items from some 40 different countries are too much to stomach.

Some of the foods on display might be considered revolting because they simply stink. That includes French Epoisses cheese, shark meat from Iceland or surstromming. This Swedish delicacy is considered one of the most pungent dishes in the world. It is usually eaten outdoors.

Surstromming consists of fermented Baltic Sea herring. The fish is so smelly that it reportedly got a renter in Germany kicked out by his landlord in 1981 after he opened a can of surstromming in the apartment building's stairwell.
Other foods in the exhibit could be considered disgusting because of the way they end up on our plate. One is Chinese mouse wine, which involves drowning and brewing baby mice in rice wine.

**Interesting Name Draws Visitors**

Andreas Ahrens is one of the curators of the exhibition. He said the foods chosen haven't gone down well with several countries that have taken offense.

"The Vegemite from Australia is causing a bit of an international incident," he said, referring to the thick, black food spread often used on toast. Australians have been quite angry about it being in the exhibit, he said.

Americans are upset about root beer and Twinkies being included, Ahrens said, "And we've had Peruvians upset that we have included Cuy, or roasted guinea pig, a famous Peruvian dish."

He said focusing on the word "disgusting" misses the point of the exhibit.

"This is aimed at getting people to realize that we shouldn't judge the foods of other cultures as disgusting so quickly," Ahrens said. "But if we would have named this the Museum of Sustainability or the Exhibit of Cultural Differences, no one would come," he said. "It wouldn't be interesting."

Directions: Use the information found in the article to identify the best response for each item.

### R1: Cite text evidence to support an analysis of what the text says explicitly

1. Which selection explains where Samuel West first showed people the unusual foods?
   - A. These delicacies are among some 80 items featured at the Disgusting Food Museum that opened in Los Angeles, California, on Sunday.
   - B. The exhibit first opened in West's native country of Sweden in October.
   - C. Then there's Nsenene, which are grasshoppers, considered a delicacy in Uganda.
   - D. Andreas Ahrens is one of the curators of the exhibition.

### R1: Cite text evidence to support an analysis of what the text says implicitly

2. Reread the section “Interesting Name Draws Visitors.”
   Americans might be upset that root beer and Twinkies are featured in the museum because...
   - A. most Americans consider root beer and Twinkies to be disgusting.
   - B. many Americans might think that including these foods in the exhibit could portray America and its foods in a negative way.
   - C. many Americans have better ideas about which foods should be included in a disgusting foods exhibit.
   - D. according to the article, liver and onions would have been a better choice of disgusting foods to represent America.

### R4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases

3. Reread the section “Interesting Name Draws Visitors.”
   What is the meaning of the word *vegemite* as it is used in this section?
   - A. an Australian food made for people who don’t eat meat.
   - B. a food mixture of vegetables and termites featured in the food museum
   - C. an Australian term that means disgusting
   - D. a food from Australia that is spread on toast

### R2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text

4. Read the following sentences from the introduction [paragraphs 1-5].
   - The museum’s aim is to expose visitors to different cultures and foods and what we may all be eating in the future.
   - Samuel West is the museum's founder. He said he came up with the idea for the two-month exhibit in light of the ongoing debate about environmentally sustainable sources of protein. Another worry is food security, or having access to healthy and affordable food.
   Which option BEST describes how these sentences help develop a central idea of the article?
   - A. They highlight some of the major issues that the museum is attempting to address.
   - B. They demonstrate that the main purpose of the museum is to shock visitors.
   - C. They explain the reason why many countries are outraged by the museum.
   - D. They illustrate that the museum creator is purposely generating controversy.