

Catching a tummy bug, and eating it!



BY Amy Fallon

TWICE a year they come to Uganda – and the children get very excited.

“Delicious! They are so delicious,” says Brenda Nakunda, 10, who’s holding a bunch of grasshoppers she’d just caught with her bare hands.

In many African countries, insects such as grasshoppers are a delicacy, or a special snack or meal.

In Uganda the seasons for grasshoppers – which are called “nсенene” in the local Luganda language – are April and November.

SETTING THE TRAP

On November 8 there was lots of excitement in Makindye, a suburb in the capital, Kampala, after the insects had arrived.



Locals can earn about \$3.60 for selling a foil package of them.

At one grasshopper business, iron sheets and bright lights were set up to attract the insects, which love to come out at night and during the rainy season.

After they catch them, locals take off their legs and wings and throw them into a saucepan on the stove.

Ibrahim Kimbowa, 12, had easily caught seven that night: “Tomorrow I’m going to cook them.”

NUTS FOR NSENE

Some Ugandans mix grasshoppers with tomatoes, onions and chilli.

Yasin Mwebe, 13, says they take 10 or 15 minutes to fry: “The whole family eats them.”

A grasshopper is said to have nearly the same amount of protein as a same-sized piece of chicken breast, and



also has calcium, iron and fat, making them good for kids who don’t have enough food to eat.

‘CRUNCHY LIKE CRISPS’

Senior Sula, who supervises at a school in Uganda, says if you eat them raw they taste like fresh vegetables, “like cabbages, carrots etc”.

But if you eat them cooked, fried and spiced, they’re “crunchy and taste like Pringles or crisps”.

SOLVING HUNGER

In 2013 a United Nations report found that at least two billion people around the world eat more than 1,900 types of insects such as grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars, bees, wasps, ants, locusts, crickets, cicadas, bugs, dragonflies and termites.

The report said some cultures choose to eat insects



not because they had to, but because they liked them.

But it said they could also help feed hungry people because they’re

nutritious, and it wanted people to put them in recipes and on restaurant menus.



Left, cooked caterpillars and, above, Dorothy Chisa sells caterpillars on the side of the footpath in Lusaka, Zambia, in southern Africa. Top right, people buy caterpillars on a train from Tanzania to Zambia and, top left, Ibrahim Kimbowa, 12, proudly displays grasshoppers he caught in Makindye, Kampala, which he plans to cook and eat. PHOTOS Amy Fallon