

# State fair food is more than cotton candy and corn dogs

By Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

Back in the 1950s, we had hot dogs on sticks. Later, fair vendors impaled and cooked offerings such as alligator sausage and walleye.

The deep fryer began to dominate fair food about a decade ago, introducing us to fried Snickers bars and Twinkies and butter balls.

This year at the California State Fair, diners are sampling maggot sandwiches and grilled raccoon, fried scorpions and dried crickets.

The increasingly exotic offerings at fairs around the country are more than just marketing gimmicks, according to culinary specialists. The trend is a reflection of an evolving American palate, popular TV shows that highlight unusual cuisine, and the innate desire to sample the latest thing.

“American people are getting more adventurous, and food TV has a lot to do with it,” said Sacramento restaurateur Randall Selland, whose establishments include the elegant Ella and The Kitchen.

“I think it’s neat that the fair is offering more than just deep-fried Twinkies and Cinnabons. It is opening up people’s minds to new things.”

**Read the whole story**