# 2024 Cicada Swarms in the U.S. Spark Trend of Insect-Based Cuisine



In May and June of 2024, trillions of cicadas from the 13-year and 17-year periodical varieties will swarm across 16 states in the U.S., creating a buzz reaching up to 105.9 decibels. This remarkable event, the first such dual emergence since 1803, is leading some Americans to incorporate these insects into their diet.

Cicadas, known for their stout bodies, clear wings, and high-pitched buzzing, are being prepared in various dishes due to their low fat, high protein content, and nutty flavor. Restaurants like Bug Appétit in New Orleans and El Rey in Philadelphia have introduced cicada-based menus, featuring items like cicada salad and salsas. Bill Broadbent, president of Entosense in Maine, touts their nutritional benefits, noting cicadas are rich in essential amino acids and antioxidants.

Home cooks are also getting creative with cicadas. Jim Warner, former program director for food and nutrition at Ohio State University Medical Center, advises foraging cicadas from wooded areas to avoid contaminants, then blanching and freezing them before cooking. Despite the culinary opportunities, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warns that those allergic to shellfish should avoid cicadas, as they are related to shrimp and lobsters.

While cicada consumption is gaining popularity, experts like Dr. Wade Syers from Michigan State University caution about potential health risks linked to foraging wild insects, citing insufficient research on contamination.

With these unprecedented swarms, entomologists like Dr. Gene Kritsky from Mount St. Joseph University emphasize the rarity of this dual emergence, describing it as a "once in a lifetime" event.