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It Tastes Just Like Chicken!

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When I was younger I was lucky enough to have a job that allowed me to travel to some relatively exotic locations. As a jewelry importer, I visited rural Mexico and Italy on several occasions. I never hit the big tourist destinations – my time was spent in small villages where the culture was very unique to the area.

One unforgettable element about those years was the food. Sometimes it was so fantastic I tried to recreate it when I returned home. Other times the simple food I was served reflected the poverty of the area, which was underlined by an attitude of using the resources that were available, whether or not they happened to be appetizing or generally acceptable to my North American standards. To encourage the reluctant American guest to try the unfamiliar foods, my hosts nearly always told me “It tastes just like chicken.”

When offered hospitality in a poverty-stricken area, it was important to cast aside my reservations and simply eat what was offered. In the Third World, survival is dependent on making the most of what is available. One

day this may be true for us as well.

After the first time I was served *el gato* (cat) in Mexico, I learned the valuable lesson of not asking where the meat had originated until after I'd already eaten. In Mexico, I have consumed cat, rattlesnake and armadillo. Here, I learned that with enough tasty seasonings and spices, nearly anything can be not only palatable, but downright tasty.

My travels in northern Italy were very different. Italy is as far from the Third World as you can get. However, the food there, especially in the Northern portion of the country, is quite different. It was in Padova, Italy that I was served *carne de cavallo*. It was served on an antipasto platter and was quite tasty, until I made the mistake of asking the waitress if it was beef. Because I didn't speak Italian and she did not speak English, she got the point across by whinnying and slapping her thigh. (I regretted instigating that little pantomime as soon as the horrible realization set in that I was eating Black Beauty.)

In a long-term change of lifestyle, we may have to get over our squeamishness in order to survive. We can take lessons now from other cultures by learning not only how they prepare their foods, but what they prepare. If it boils down to survival, we may have to broaden our concept of what constitutes an acceptable source of protein.

Changing the texture of the meat can make it more palatable. Ground meat of any type can be added to spaghetti sauce or any other recipe in which you would use ground beef. You can turn your meat into sausage with the use of a meat grinder and the addition of sage and some other spices. Smoking the meat or turning it into jerky are other options that make it less recognizable to the more squeamish members of the family.

When providing food for your family in a survival situation, think outside of items you would find in the meat department of your local Kroger. In many places the following animals find their ways into the stew pot:

- Alligator/Crocodile
- Armadillo
- Bear
- Beaver
- Boar
- Cat
- Dog
- Fertilized Eggs
- Frog
- Grouse
- Guinea Pig
- Horse
- Insects
- Rabbit
- Raccoon
- Rats
- Seal
- Snake
- Squirrel
- Turtle
- Worms/Grub

Take the time now to look over some recipes for meats that you may not have considered before. Then you can plan ahead by stocking the spices needed to prepare these foods in the tastiest way possible. After all, it tastes just like chicken.

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URLs in this post:

[1] **Chicken:** <http://www.backwoodsbound.com/zmisc3chick.html>

[2] **Chili Mix:** <http://www.backwoodsbound.com/zchili.html>

[3] **Deer:** <http://www.backwoodsbound.com/zdeer.html>

[4] **Desserts:** <http://www.backwoodsbound.com/zdess.html>

- [5] **Dove:** <http://www.backwoodsbound.com/zdove.html>
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