

by Julie Mais
Editor



A culinary voyage

I come from a Midwestern meat and potatoes kind of family, with a slightly southern twist. Roast for Sunday dinner was common, and grandma's sweet tea was a highlight. I didn't necessarily grow up as an adventurous eater — aside from Rocky Mountain oysters and beef tongue being delicacies in our circle.

I was never a picky eater though, and my parents made sure of that. Though instructed to always eat, or at least taste, what's served to me, I was just never pushed out of my culinary comfort zone.

The summer after my sophomore year of college, I found myself in Costa Rica on an animal science study tour. It was here that I got a real taste of travel and food. We were served “gallo pinto” (rice and beans) every, and I had my first plantain. While visiting a family with an aquaculture operation, they served us a meal. It was the whole fish — head, tail, fins and all. It was weird, and it was delicious, and I was hooked.

From then on, travel and trying new foods have gone hand in hand. When visiting anywhere new, you can find me searching for the best place to eat what the locals eat. Pasties in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, horsehoes near Springfield, Ill., the lobster rolls of Maine and clam chowder bread bowls in San Francisco are a few I've thoroughly enjoyed in the States.

Living in Italy for a semester in college allowed me to pack on the pounds from the local pasta, have the best pizza of my life and learn that I love mussels.

What I tried while visiting China is not for the faint of heart. While I

enjoyed some truly wonderful cuisine there, the chicken head and feet our group tried did not make that list. Neither did the “century egg,” which is a preserved egg traditionally kept in a mud paste for a few months, or “100 days.”

The ultimate customer

My most recent big adventure, following graduate school, took me to the small West African country of Sierra Leone. A summer spent there helped me to sincerely appreciate how blessed we are in the United States. In this severely impoverished country, many families didn't know where their next meal would come from. However, it was in this country, where rice was a staple, I witnessed generosity beyond measure.

In the rural town I was staying in, food, in my American sense, was often hard to come by. There was a small market in a nearby village where cassava and potato leaves, spices, rice and fish are always available. There was always a friendly local to help me along and fill my stomach.

Today, I too often take for granted the affordable, healthy and safe food readily available here in the U.S. When I think about that summer, I'm led to appreciate the farmers and ranchers who work so hard and sacrifice so

much to make that a reality.

The October *Angus Journal* is about “Understanding the Consumer.” I've heard more than once from industry leaders, that we do not just raise cattle, we raise beef. Angus breeders have a wonderful story to share with their ultimate customer — the consumer. Each day producers work to provide safe, wholesome and healthy beef, and that's something to be proud of.

In this issue, we provide some practical tips for having positive conversations with those who are purchasing Angus beef. Consumers today want to know more about where their food comes from, so it's imperative cattlemen can answer their questions in a helpful way.

Also in this issue we celebrate Angus breeders and cattlemen who are doing exceptional work to raise and promote *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand products enjoyed by so many.

Before you eat your next steak, roast or burger (or beef tongue), take a moment to appreciate the affordable, delicious and safe meal you are about to enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie".

jmais@angus.org