

Bugs on the menu at Swiss supermarket

August 14 2017



Protein-rich mealworms make up the bulk of the "insect balls" due to go on sale at Switzerland's Coop supermarket

Switzerland's first insect-based food aimed at humans will go on sale next week following a revision of the country's food safety laws, a supermarket chain said Monday.

Switzerland's second-largest supermarket chain, Coop, announced it would begin selling an insect burger, and insect balls, based on protein-rich mealworm.

The products, made by a Swiss start-up called Essento, will be available in a handful of Coop branches, including in Geneva, Bern and Zurich, as of August 21, according to a statement.

Switzerland is the first European country to authorise the sale of insect-based food items for human consumption, a spokeswoman for the country's food safety authority told AFP.

Swiss [food safety laws](#) were changed last May to allow for the sale of food items containing three types of insects: crickets, grasshoppers and mealworms, which are the larval form of the mealworm beetle.

These insects, long used in animal feed, must be bred under strict supervision for four generations before they are considered appropriate for [human consumption](#), according to Swiss law.

Local production will thus take a few months to get started.

In the meantime, imports are possible under strict conditions—the insects must be raised in accordance with the Swiss requirements at a company submitted to inspections by national [food safety](#) authorities.

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Citation: Bugs on the menu at Swiss supermarket (2017, August 14) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-08-bugs-menu-swiss-supermarket.html>

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