

Modified Foods to Die For



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By [Lore Sjöberg](#) Also by this reporter

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Some people are concerned that genetically modified foods may be unhealthy. Others fear that they will destroy the environment. My concern is that they will bore me until I want to die. Come on, increased yields? Pest resistance? Dull, dull, dull. If we're going to be tinkering with the very building blocks of life, I expect to be seriously entertained. Here are my suggestions for modified foods that would make it worth playing God.

Corn mosaics

What's the worst thing about eating corn? That's right, those interminable rows of fascistically identical kernels. I've seen Indian corn in any number of hokey Thanksgiving centerpieces, so I know we can do better. What if we could genetically arrange different-colored kernels of corn so that when we peel back the husk we're greeted with, say, an image of Catherine Zeta-Jones playing croquet in a lovely summer dress? Or maybe some sort of futuristic space tank? That, my friends, would give new meaning to the word "shuck-worthy."

Beef-flavored soybeans

Judging from the 400 varieties of non-meat meatlike items in your average California supermarket, the one thing vegetarians want most is the great taste of flesh. If we could just go ahead and make a soybean that tastes like top sirloin right off the vine or branch or whatever soybeans grow on, then we could cut out any number of middlepersons. Or, alternatively, couldn't we genetically modify cows just enough so they're technically plant life? Like, get some xylem and phloem in there. Maybe some chlorophyll, just enough so that they taste the same but they move over to the "vegetable" column. That would be a crime against nature that would make *everyone* happy!

Food with surprises in the middle

The second-most beloved category of foodstuffs in America is "things with something interesting in the middle." (The most-beloved is "things that come with dippin' sauce.") Whether it's cheese in our pizza crusts, "stuf" in our Oreos, or caramel in our pre-packaged ice cream cones, we love to discover that our delicious food contains even more delicious guts. Until now, most fruits and vegetables have had only disappointment at their core, in the form of hard pits, bitter seeds or determined insects. Why can't we grow apples and carrots with something interesting squished into the middle? Why have a regular apple when you can have one that contains creamy nougat? Who would ever even consider eating a regular carrot when you can get one that bleeds picante ranch dressing? And if our scientists work really hard, maybe we can get a toy surprise in there, too.

Anti-allergic food

I feel sad -- weepy, really -- when I hear about people who can't even eat a single peanut without keeling over and dying. Some of them can't even eat food that's made on the same machinery as something containing peanuts, and a very unlucky few can't even eat food that contains the letters in the word "peanut" rearranged, like the delicious South American guinea pig-based dish "npeatu." It's simply not fair, and I think we need to correct this injustice. I propose our finest genetic engineers create an incredibly delicious food that will kill you if you eat it, *unless* you're allergic to peanuts. If you can't eat peanuts, you can shovel this stuff down all day, and you probably will, because it will be *so delicious*. "Keep your PBJ and your dan-dan noodles," the peanut-sensitive will say. "I'm just going to have some more of this savory, fulfilling, Hommelangooboojib." Or whatever they end up calling it.

Tomatoes that are actually a vegetable

I'm really tired of stupid arguments and boring trivia about whether tomatoes are actually a fruit or a vegetable. They taste like a vegetable, so the obvious choice is to make a plant that grows tomatoes as part of the root system or stalk or something. Alternatively, you could make them sweet, like strawberries. Hey, let's do both. Scientists with odd birthdates, make vegetable tomatoes, scientists with even birthdates, make sweet fruit tomatoes. You can race!

Better-tasting persimmons

Seriously, these things look really delicious but they taste really gross. Make them taste better, please.

Born helpless, nude and unable to provide for himself, Lore Sjöberg eventually overcame these

handicaps to become a pioneer, a mountaineer and a puppeteer.