

The food of love

There's everyday food, and there's rude food – and GI values apart, it's good to know that some of the sexiest morsels are not wickedly fattening. Annie takes a long, mouth-watering look at glorious food to get your pulse racing

It was the immortal bard who gave us that much-quoted line, 'If music be the food of love, play on; give me excess of it.' (Years ago, my partner used to play in a punk band, and he used to introduce their gigs with the warning, 'If music be the food of love, prepare for indigestion...'). It's a pretty conceit, but as we all know, food is the food of love. But just as you won't get turned on by every sort of music (brass bands, Max Bygraves, Snow Patrol spring immediately to my mind), not all food is sexy... but some is... very sexy indeed.

Touchy feely

One of the things that makes certain foods irresistibly seductive is the indulgence of having small, beautiful morsels to slurp and savour – asparagus dripping with warm butter; mussels sucked from a half shell and dissolving into that lovely briny marine flavour; little bubbles of caviare which fizzle as you crush them on your tongue. Real English strawberries soaked in something alcoholic ... Makes your mouth water...

It's a pity that so many of these erotic morsels are so expensive – but no-one

normal is going to feel turned on by a big, cheap plate of braised tripe, or pease pudding (or if they do, perhaps they should contact us for a perverted food fetish feature). Luckily, though, if food is really exciting, you don't need that much for it to work its magic.

One of the great things about 'rude' food is being able to feed it into your partner's mouth – so finger food is perfect. And oysters, with their aphrodisiac reputation, are an ideally packaged mouthful. Admittedly, they're not pretty, but close your eyes, and for texture, aroma and sensation, they're hard to beat.

Eye appeal

A cookery editor I used to work with used to describe quarter-cut figs quite shamelessly as looking like 'little c**ts' and the look of food can be very suggestive. I don't mean celebration cakes made to look like balconette-clad breasts or novelty banana sundaes contrived to look like willies. Ho hum. If you want to eat a banana in a provocative way, unzip one and go ahead, but don't encourage people to play about with their food!

However, food that looks sexual needs to be seen to be appreciated – a picture paints a thousand words and all that. I've been using the term 'rude food' – and must credit it where it is due. There's a book that's been in my family for many years, of indulgent photography by David Thorpe,

called *Rude Food*. It's sadly out of print now, as I found when I contacted the publishers, Aurum Press, but as with so many lost titles, there are copies to be found on the internet. I could describe to you the naughty finger sliding into the Sole Colbert, the drizzling oil dressing a salad on a naked body or the oysters on a bare stomach – but I end this short exploration of titillating food with a borrowed image to appeal to all you bondage fans. I recommend to you 'Strict Spaghetti' – and as the woman in the advert (who says 'feud' instead of 'food') would say, 'This is not just food, this is S and M food...'

Don't torture yourself over the calories – asparagus are a measly four calories per spear (but add the butter!), oysters just five calories each, mussels ten apiece (excluding the wine, etc), strawberries are just two calories each, figs about twenty calories per fruit, and bananas a modest eighty calories a go. So go on - enjoy!

Image taken from 'Rude Food' ©1978 David Thorpe & Aurum Press