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Balut from Southeastern Asia

Duffy Duck would have had a cruel faith in the Philippines even before birth. Or at least his offspring would have. 'Cause one of the local delicacies in the Philippines is balut: ducklings boiled before they hatch. Fertilized duck eggs are let to develop until, on average, 17 days and then boiled. The nearly-developed embryo is consumed in the shell. Balut ("wrapped" in Filipino) is in fact also very appreciated in China, Cambodia and Vietnam. It is thought to be an aphrodisiac and it is in fact a high-protein, hearty snack. Baluts are mostly sold by street vendors at night. "The flavor is savory and delicious; the texture satisfying" said Western travelers who surpassed the idea of eating something with shit and feathers... They match and are often served with beer. Balut are most often eaten with a pinch of salt, though some prefer to pipe the balut in vinegar-onion sauce, chili or vinegar to complement their egg. The hot egg is flicked carefully, but forcefully at the top with the middle finger and a small hole is gently removed from the top, so the savory broth can be sipped before removing the whole shell. The eggs are savored for their balance of textures and flavors. After peeling the egg, the yolk and young chick inside can be eaten. It's usually just eaten all the way through, in about 3 mouthful bites. Forming feathers, head, wings, and skeleton can be seen, but it's basically an extra-chewy Easter egg. Even if balut is associated with the Philippines, it is not native to the Philippines. On the continent, the most similar balut is found in Cambodia. A similar Chinese plate is known as maodan ("hairy egg"), and Chinese traders and migrants are supposed to have brought it to the Philippines. Maodan is served skewered. Balut-making has been localized by the balut-makers and even today balut manufacturing has not been mechanized. The eggs that after nine days in the sun have formed zygote inside enter into the production of balut. 8 days later, the eggs are ready for the balut. Uncooked Balut is usually sold boiled, rarely raw. The cooking process is identical to that of hard-boiled chicken eggs, and baluts are enjoyed while still warm. Duck eggs that have not developed zygote after nine to twelve days will look, smell and taste similar to a regular hard-boiled egg. In the Philippines, the perfect balut is 17 days old. Balut can be made earlier, but even Westerners who tasted it agreed that older than 17 days is better than younger. Around 17 days, the duckling inside has undeveloped its beak, feathers or claws and bones. The Vietnamese balut is from 19 days up to 21 days, when the duckling is old enough to be recognizable and has firm but tender bones. Well, a question remains: why balut is made from duck eggs and not from hen eggs? Balut eaters agree that "chicken balut" has a bad taste, to say the least ...