

Chester County IFYE Enjoys Brazilian Food—Well, Most of It

Editor's Note: Miss Davida McCartney, Chester Springs, Chester County, is an International Farm Youth Exchange (IFYE) delegate assigned to a Youth Development Project (YDP) in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she is assisting in the development and expansion of type programs. Following is her report on foods in Sao Paulo:

Rice and beans, rice and beans!

That's all I heard about Brazilian food before I left the States

And it is typical of the Brazilians

But here I am living in a Japanese home and working mostly with Japanese and Nisei (Brazilians born of Japanese parents) in a state of Brazil where the Japanese rank third in population after the Portuguese and Italians

I had a good sampling of rice and beans the first five weeks of my stay. We three YDP's (Youth Development Project) stayed in a boarding house for Japanese students in the city of Sao Paulo. There white rice cooked with water and oil, cooked dry beans and their juice, and a little pork rind are the main parts of two meals a day.

It is incredible the amounts of these they eat and still remain thin!

The national dish "feijoadá" (the dry beans are called feijao) seems to me to be the usual feijao cooked with a little more meat.

My Japanese family doesn't follow this Brazilian pattern.

We eat rice at lunch and supper, but rarely have feijao. These two meals are equal in size and type of foods.

It is hard for my family here to believe I can make lunch of a can of soup and a sandwich at home, and eat it in a few minutes.

Meals here take a lot of time and effort to prepare. There's no quick rice, but pressure cookers are used often.

In four months I think only four cans of food have been used in our house. In fact, so few canned foods are used that can openers other than the pry type are just being introduced in the city of Sao Paulo. I brought one to my family, and it is quite a novelty.

Here in Pompeia my reputation precedes me in many places. People are astonished that I, a foreigner, eat and like their foods. Several times I've been greeted with, "O, you eat everything!"

I've found a lot of new foods, or new ways of preparing familiar foods.

Here the oven is rarely used and almost everything is fried in lots of oil—usually peanut oil. I've had to get used to this. Even cheese is tastier when dipped in oil! Thank you, I'll take mine plain.

As my Japanese sister says, the Japanese use everything. Carrot greens and scallion tops are very tasty and often combined with other vegetables, dipped in a batter and fried in deep fat. My family has adopted my name of "spiders" for the resulting product which looks as if it has vegetable legs extending from the solid body.

However, one thing which I do taste is a sort of pasty sauce of raw fish stomachs. It is used like jelly on bread, as a topping for the rice, or even plain.

There is a variety of fruits and vegetables, and the climate provides for fresh things all year round.

Most of the Japanese have large gardens and many do truck farming. On our farm we are almost self-sufficient. In our back-

yard we have oranges, lemons, papayas, mangos, bananas, coconuts, pineapples, peaches, and several tropical fruits that are not known in the U.S.

Food seems plentiful, yet many people are undernourished. The "Alliance for Progress" supplies powdered milk and other staples to schools for needy children.

I can't forget coffee. Brazil is the world's leading producer, and the U.S. is the largest buyer, but the U.S. coffee-drinker wouldn't realize it is the same beverage when he tries it here. It is very strong and usually very sweet.

Brazilians regard U.S. coffee as almost tasteless colored water. I (a "water American") feel like hiding everytime the coffee comes out when I'm visiting. Luckily it is always served in almost doll-sized cups, so I can manage.



Miss Davida McCartney Likes Brazilian Food

For special occasions, my family pitches in to make Japanese sweets out of feijao. The cooked, strained, and sweetened beans make a filling for a pastry and are usually baked. The pastry for "manju" is a rather traditional one of flour, but the one for "moti" is different.

I was surprised one day to see my brother pounding cooked rice in a hollowed-out tree stump with a huge wooden mallet. Between pounds, my mother slapped a little water on the rice and eventually it turned into a dough that was wrapped around the filling. The resulting treat was eaten thus, or baked or fried.

Breakfast in my Brazilian-Japanese home consists of bread and coffee and/or hot milk.

The 10 a.m. lunch is rice, a

salad of cucumber and tomatoes, some cooked greens (often with a little egg mixed in), fish, and oranges for dessert.

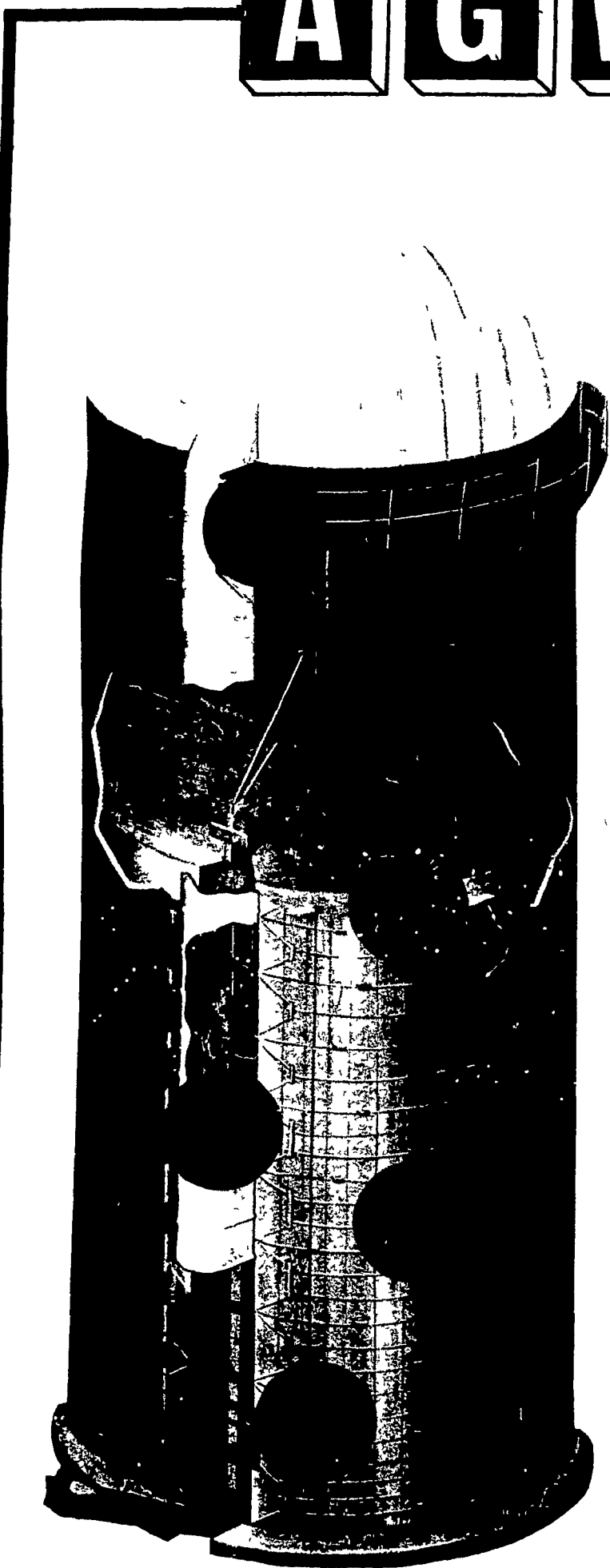
At 1:30 is "café"—bread and coffee again, and hot milk. I use a mixture of hot milk with just enough coffee for flavor.

At the 6:30 supper there is rice, of course, potatoes cooked with just enough meat for flavoring, "spiders", salad, and oranges.

One day when we had fried potatoes at lunch and mashed potatoes at the evening meal, my family of nine consumed just 10 pounds of potatoes.

I'm really enjoying the food, and although everyone tells me that rice and oil don't make people fat, I'm having a hard time convincing my clothes of it.

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