

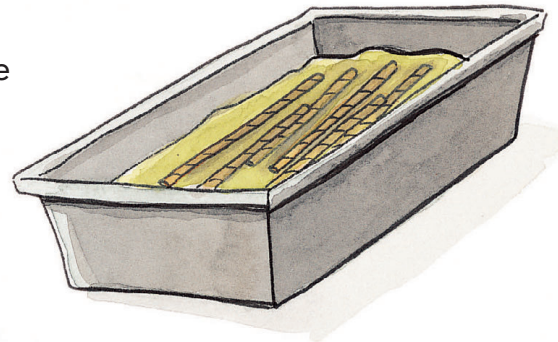


7. ZOMBIE FOOD

A simple fact: human zombies don't exist. But there are some creatures that like to eat rotting flesh. In this next activity you can make some "rotting" food of your own!

You Will Need:

- an adult helper
- 180 mL ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) of flavoured drink or coloured juice
- a small saucepan
- a stove
- a package of unflavoured gelatin
- a spoon
- two identical loaf pans
- wide plastic drinking straws
- a bag of rice or another heavy object



What to Do

1. Have an adult bring the juice or flavoured drink to a boil in the saucepan.
2. Place the gelatin in one of the loaf pans and have an adult pour the boiling liquid, a little bit at a time, into the pan. Stir until the gelatin has dissolved.
3. Let the liquid cool to room temperature.
4. Lay the straws flat into the liquid, making sure the liquid covers the straws.
5. Place the second loaf pan (with the flat side down) into the pan with the liquid, and place a bag of rice or other heavy object into the pan. This will weigh down the straws so they don't float above the liquid.
6. Place the pans in the fridge and allow the gelatin to set. After several hours, remove the pans from the fridge and separate the straws. Squeeze out the "snakes" by running your fingers down the straws.



I ATE WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED?

Gelatin contains a protein (yes! another polymer) made from animal skin and bones. Like guar gum, gelatin is a thickening agent. If you hadn't added the gelatin to your juice, it would have remained liquid and would not have set.

You can find gelatin in many things that you eat, including gummy candy, marshmallows, and pudding. Be thankful that you were able to use a package of gelatin to make your snakes. If you had done this activity more than 100 years ago, you would have had to boil up a cow's feet or knuckles to get the same ingredient.

STRANGE . . . BUT TRUE!

Scientists in Sweden have discovered a type of "zombie worm" that lives off the bones of dead whales. They have given the creature the exotic name of *Osedax mucofloris*, which loosely translates as "bone-eating snot flower." The name is a pretty accurate description, as these tiny worms look like mucous-covered flowers poking out from the whale bones.

