

COCKROACHES

If this has happened to you then you know just how creepy it is. You go away for the weekend to visit your great-aunt (you know—the one who smells of mothballs and pinches your cheeks every 10 seconds). When you come home, you walk into the kitchen, turn on the light, and it's like the whole floor is moving. There are about one million *things* swarming all over the place.

The swarming things see you. They say something like, "Hey! Who turned on the lights? Uh-oh, big sucker about to step on us!" And before you can move your feet, they're gone, back into the woodwork. Party's over!

"WHAT'CHA GOT? I'LL EAT ANYTHING!"

Hard. Soft. Sweet. Sour. Alive. Dead. Doesn't really matter to a roach. They'll eat the sweat out of your sneakers, the grease on the stove. They'll eat the glue on your postage stamps and the wiring in your TV set. They will eat the fingernails of sleeping sailors aboard a ship. They even eat left-over bits of their own bodies!

They will eat paper, soap, and paint. Oh, and food, too. They *love* food!

And, if there's nothing around to eat at all? Hey, that's okay too! Roaches can go for incredibly long periods of time without eating anything. They can also survive on just about anything. And that is the secret of their success. When times get really tough and there's nothing to snack on, they'll turn on each other and dine on their friends. Just rip open the stomach and chow down! (See? There are all kinds of cannibals in this world.)

When it comes to disgusting houseguests, nothing can top a roach. That's because where there's one, there are zillions. Crawling through the cupboards. Swarming through the floorboards. In your toothpaste and your shoes. Chillin' in the fridge, and leaving cockroach ca-ca wherever they wander.

The good news is that of the 4,000 known species in the world, only 25 species get in the way of humans. The

bad news is, those 25 species that live in our homes leave almost-invisible piles of roach poop all over the place.

