

FRESH ELEPHANT HEART For Lunch

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #14 —

It was a short track, mid-morning, on the third day of the safari. We were walking at a pretty good clip and came into an opening in the bush to discover the elephant standing about fifty yards to our right; facing us, but apparently asleep. One shot in the brain with the 375 H&H and the bull fell where he stood – never knowing we were on his track. We took lots of pictures and then began the long process of removing the tusks.



Fresh elephant cooked over an open fire is pretty special.

That's when I said to the PH: "Let's have fresh elephant heart for lunch." He had never done it before, but was game to give it a try.

Frederick Selous,

and other ivory hunters of the 19th century, wrote about eating elephant heart. Every hunter had to feed his crew and with several tons of elephant meat on the ground, there wasn't any reason to waste ammunition or time shooting something else – meat is meat. Roosevelt hunted in 1909/1910 and wrote about eating elephant heart. So, I was just carrying on a tradition.

Now, removing the heart from an elephant is just like doing the same on an elk or a deer; well not exactly, you don't eviscerate an elephant. The first step is to slice away a three foot square of skin over the area of the heart; next, the ribs have to be cut with an axe to get into the body cavity. Actually removing the heart is now pretty straightforward, except that it's as big as a five gallon bucket.



It is the ivory tusks that are the trophy; these weigh 40 and 46 pounds.

I have eaten fresh moose meat and sheep meat at the kill site, up in the high meadows and on the mountainside, and can say that preparation is about the same, and it must be simple. First, I build a small fire; then cut some sticks that are long enough for cooking, without burning my hands. The meat is cut into small cubes that will cook quickly. If I'm fortunate enough to have salt and pepper, all the better; but it's certainly not necessary.

“...it's as big as a five gallon bucket.”

Of all my experiences in hunting, fresh elephant heart at the kill site ranks pretty high up on the list – for taste, as well as tradition – and to celebrate the success of the hunt.

Midway USA

Larry Potterfield

Kibaoni Camp
Selous Game Reserve
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There are estimated to be 800,000 elephant in Africa. Only a few are trophies and this is one of them. My rifle is the prototype "Nearly-Perfect Safari Rifle."