

Amazon boss Jeff Bezos pictured eating an iguana

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Amazon boss Jeff Bezos has been pictured eating roasted iguana at an exclusive New York dinner event attended by some of the world's richest entrepreneurs.

The bizarre appetisers were served up alongside exotic dishes including python, tarantula and cockroaches at this year's Explorers Club Annual Dinner.

Dishes were specially selected to raise awareness of how members can help take pressure off animals threatened by invasive species, an attendee told MailOnline.



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Amazon boss Jeff Bezos has been pictured eating iguana at an exclusive New York dinner event attended by some of the world's richest men. The bizarre appetisers were served up alongside exotic dishes including tarantula and cockroaches at this year's Explorers Club

Annual Dinner

Creatures on Saturday's menu included python, crickets, tarantulas, cockroaches and grubs on cake pops, as well as 'jellyfish salad'.

The member's only event marked the Explorers' Club's 114th annual dinner, a glamorous black tie event famed for serving up exotic dishes.

As well as Bezos, billionaire attendees included real estate tycoon Ed Roski and Swedish pharmaceutical titan Frederik Paulsen.

In the past, guests were served various rare animals hunted from the wild by the society's members, made up of eminent scientists and explorers.

Dishes were specially selected to raise awareness of how members can help take pressure off animals threatened by invasive species, an attendee told MailOnline. Pictured is the roasted iguana

Other creatures on the menu included crickets, tarantulas (right), cockroaches and grubs on cake pops (left), as well as 'jellyfish salad'.

During Saturday's event Bezos accepted the Buzz Aldrin Space Exploration Award for work with his private space firm Blue Origin

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL EXPLORERS' CLUB DINNER AND WHY ARE EXOTIC ANIMALS ON THE MENU?

The Explorers' Club promotes the scientific exploration of land, sea, air, and space by supporting research and education in the sciences.

Each year, the century-old society holds an exclusive black tie dinner event in New York where it hands out awards to innovators.

In the past, guests were served various rare animals hunted from the wild by the society's members, made up of eminent scientists and explorers.

But for a number of years the club's annual dinner has served up a selection of invasive species in an attempt to inspire a new food market.

Dishes are specially selected to raise awareness of how members can help take pressure off animals threatened by invasive species.

Creatures served at previous dinners include maple-glazed hog face, applewood-barbecued bull 'rods' and testicles, turtle cakes, python patties with bacon, and jellyfish slivers in white soy marinade.

At the club's 2018 event, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos was pictured eating roasted green iguana - a dish that has been served at previous Explorers' Club dinners.

Green Iguanas, native to central and South America, are overwhelming Puerto Rico and southern Florida.

The pests - which can carry salmonella - frequently decimate lawns and gardens and dig deep nesting burrows that destroy sidewalks, sea walls and foundations.

But for a number of years the club's annual dinner has served up a selection of invasive species in an attempt to inspire a new food market, including iguana.

Sadie Whitelocks, an Explorer's Club member who was a guest at Saturday's event, said: 'It was referred to as a whole roasted iguana, with general tso sauce.

'It was lovely and juicy. Much nicer than chicken.'

Green Iguanas, native to central and South America, are overwhelming Puerto Rico and southern Florida.

Bezos (pictured) is believed to be the richest man to have ever lived and has more money than the countries of Estonia, Tunisia, Iceland and Jamaica combined. He hopes to use part of his amassed fortune to fund Blue Origin and take paying passengers to space

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In a 2016 interview, Gene Rurka, an exotic foods expert who runs the exotic foods portion of the annual dinner, told [PopSci](#): 'We need to create a market for invasives in order to relieve pressure on other species'.

During Saturday's event Bezos accepted the Buzz Aldrin Space Exploration Award for work with his private space firm Blue Origin.

The award is handed out to those 'noted for accomplishments in exploration of outer space that best typify the spirit of explorer Buzz Aldrin,' according to a description on The Explorers' Club's website.

Bezos and Blue Origin are competing with Elon Musk's SpaceX and Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic to be the first to send commercial passengers into space.

Bezos, currently the world's richest man, is bankrolling Blue Origin through sales of his Amazon stock and hopes to subsidise the price of future flights in its reusable rockets.

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the price of future flights in its reusable rockets. The New Shepard rocket made its first test flight in over a year in December 2017 (pictured)

WHO IS JEFF BEZOS?

Jeff Bezos is best known as the founder and CEO of online giant Amazon.

Born in New Mexico and raised in Houston, Texas, he went on to attend the prestigious Princeton University and graduated in 1986.

After a decade or so of work on Wall Street, Mr Bezos founded his own company in 1994.

Jeff Bezos was born in 1964 and is founder and CEO of Amazon. He is also the richest person in the world

He initially called his company Cadabra, and then reportedly changed the name to Amazon when a colleague misheard it as 'cadaver'.

Initially, it was launched as an online book store working out of Bezo's garage in Seattle but rapidly grew to include a variety of goods and services.

Now, Amazon is one of the biggest companies in the world and the most successful website in the world.

In 2017, the company had \$177.9 billion (£127.6 billion) in revenue and is worth around \$430 billion (£309 billion).

Mr Bezos himself has an estimated net worth of \$121.3 billion (£87 billion).

He has bought and accumulated a variety of different companies and outlets including: Whole Foods, The Washington Post, Twitch and IMDB.

He has a controlling share of 17 per cent in his first company, Amazon.

In 2017, Jeff Bezos surpassed Bill Gates to become the richest person in the world, and the richest person of the modern world.

He has been married since 1994 and has four children.

Bloomberg reports that in his acceptance speech, Bezos said: 'The price of admission to space is very high.

'I'm in the process of converting my Amazon lottery winnings into a much lower price of



admission so we can go explore the solar system.'

Bezos revealed in April 2017 that he finances Blue Origin with around \$1 billion (£720 million) of Amazon stock each year.



Bezos and Blue Origin are competing with Elon Musk's SpaceX and Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic to be the first to send commercial passengers into space. In December 2017, a mannequin (pictured) was launched to assess the rocket's impact on passengers

That could soon increase, as the battle to send tourists into space and to the moon and Mars heats up between the three billionaires.

Bezos has varied business interests and his empire should provide enough money to finance the space venture with ease.

Amongst the 1,200 guests was astronaut James Lovell, the first person to journey twice to the moon, on Apollo 8 and Apollo 13.

Bezos, who also owns Whole Foods, The Washington Post, Twitch and IMDB, recently became the richest man in the world - with a net worth of around \$131 billion (£91.3 billion).

According to Bloomberg's billionaire tracker, that makes the Amazon founder and ex-Wall Street trader richer than nearly two thirds of the world's nations.

Bezos is believed to be the richest man to have ever lived and has more money than the countries of Estonia, Tunisia, Iceland and Jamaica combined.

Although indicating he may increase his financing of the Blue Origin project, he later declined to clarify just how much of his fortune he'll spend on space travel.

At Saturday's event, Dr James Watson, who co-discovered the structure of DNA, advised Bezos to spend just a quarter of his money on space exploration.

Watson joked that 'we've got to fix the potholes' and look after the needs of our own planet, as well as looking to the stars.

With motivation to explore other territories and planets in the solar system, Bezos said he loves this planet too.

'We have sent a lot of probes to every planet in this solar system. Believe me, this is the best one,' he said.

'The world that we live on is an absolute gem.'

The idea of space as a backup if Earth is destroyed is 'unmotivating,' he added.

'I want a world for my grandchildren's grandchildren to live in,' Bezos said.

'I also want a dynamic world, a world that is expanding and growing. I do not believe in stasis. And this planet is finite.'

HOW DOES BLUE ORIGIN'S REUSABLE SPACECRAFT WORK?

The system consists of a pressurised crew capsule atop a reusable 'New Shepard' booster rocket.

The two vehicles launch together, accelerating for approximately two and a half minutes, before the engine cuts off.

The capsule then separates from the booster to coast quietly into space.

After a few minutes of free fall, the booster performs an autonomous rocket-powered vertical landing.

The passenger capsule lands softly under parachutes, both ready to be used again.