

## Eater's Manifesto an Eye-Opening Read

I just finished listening to a great book on audio CD which I found at the library. It sure changed some of my thinking about what qualifies as food. Called *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*, by Michael Pollan, the book created a whole paradigm shift in the way I now see food (who knew it needed to be defended?) But, please, don't read it if you don't want to question your eating habits or broaden your definition of food—ignorance, as they say, truly is bliss.

Although the book can be a little slow in spots when getting into some of the technical explanations about nutritional science and the food industry, there are many interesting questions the author raises that deserve reflection. His primary advice is this: Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants. At first glance, this sounds pretty mundane—fairly simple. But upon further inspection, you start to realize that much of what we call food isn't really that. It may look like food, smell like food and taste like food, but it is actually a chemically-engineered imitation—"edible food-like substances" as Pollan refers to most of the processed food items sitting on store shelves today. But we have to get our recommended daily nutrients somehow, right?

He calls this dilemma the American Paradox: the more we worry about nutrition, the less healthy we become. It seems we have reduced food to a nutrient-by-nutrient buffet, what Pollan calls "nutritionism."

If you can put a health label on a bag of chips and put vitamins in cola then there must be something going awry with our food system. Pollan defines food as anything "that your grandmother, or probably your great grandmother, would recognize." Eating food that is as close to how you would find it in nature is really the way to go.

If you like food, actually if you eat food, you might want to flip through the pages—especially the last few chapters where he makes recommendations and gives a few rules of thumb to guide us in the often confusing maze of decision-making in trying to find "real" food for our tables. This eye-opening concept is also explored in a book called *Food Matters*, by Mark Britton (complete with recipes), which I plan to read next. I would also like to read Pollan's first book called *The Omnivore's Dilemma* which discusses the American way of eating. You can search online for further book reviews to see what you think of these selections—some websites explain these books in great detail with many excerpts. Let me know your thoughts!

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