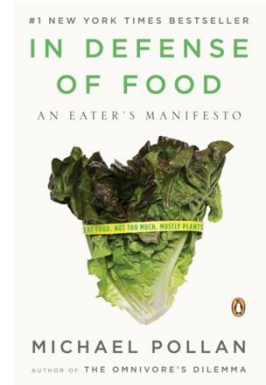


Discussion Guide

In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto

By Michael Pollan

1. Michael Pollan approaches eating as an activity filled with ethical issues. Do you agree that the act of eating is as morally weighty as he says it is? What questions concern you most about the way you eat or the way your food is created?
2. Some readers might argue that Pollan's ethics do not go far enough, perhaps because he does not urge us all to become vegetarians. Did you find yourself quarreling with any of Pollan's ethical positions, and why?
3. Pollan argues that capitalism is a poor economic model to apply to the problems of food production and consumption. Do you agree or disagree, and why?
4. Pollan also shows a number of instances in which government policies have apparently worsened the crisis in our food culture. What do you think should be the proper role of government in deciding how we grow, process, and eat our food?
5. Pollan claims that the Western diet has been replaced by nutrients. What does he mean by that? When he uses the term "nutritionalism," to what is he referring?
6. Pollan also says that after 30-years of nutritional advice from health experts, we're actually sicker than before. Do you agree? What kind of evidence does he use to support that claim?
7. How has Michael Pollan changed the way you think about food?
8. At the end of *In Defense of Food*, Pollan offers a series of recommendations for improved eating. Which, if any, do you intend to adopt in your own life?
9. Which of Pollan's recommendations would you be least likely to accept, and why?
10. Do you think that the way Americans eat reveals anything about our national character and broader shared values? How is Pollan's writing a statement not only about American eating, but about American culture and life?
11. Pollan quotes the words of Wendell Berry: "Eating is an agricultural act." What does Berry mean by this, and why is his message so important to Pollan's writing?
12. What, in the course of his writing, does Michael Pollan reveal about his own personality? What do you like about him? What, if anything, rubs you the wrong way?
13. If Michael Pollan were coming to your place for dinner, what would you serve him and why?



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