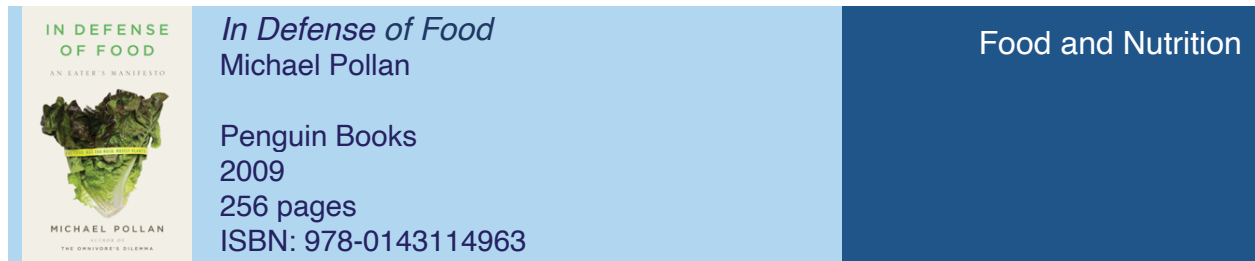


Discussion Guide



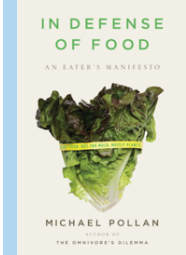
Summary

Most of what we're consuming today in Western society is no longer the product of nature but of food science, argues Michael Pollan. The result is what he calls the American Paradox: The more we worry about nutrition, the less healthy we seem to become. With the book, *In Defense of Food*, Pollan proposes a new (and very old) answer to the question of what we should eat that comes down to seven simple but liberating words: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." Pollan's bracing and eloquent manifesto shows us how we can start making thoughtful food choices that will enrich our lives, enlarge our sense of what it means to be healthy, and bring pleasure back to eating.

Questions

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 several 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 Pollan claims that the Western diet has been replaced by nutrients.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 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?

Discussion Guide

	<p><i>In Defense of Food</i> Michael Pollan</p> <p>Penguin Books 2009 256 pages ISBN: 978-0143114963</p>	<p>Food and Nutrition</p>
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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, during 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?