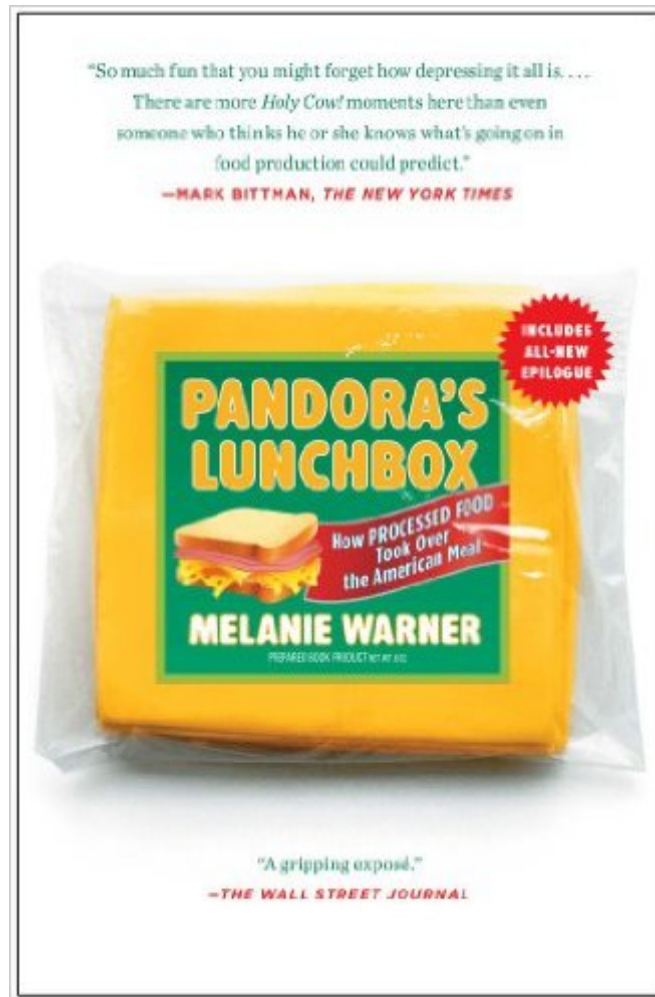


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Pandora's Lunchbox: How Processed Food Took Over The American Meal



Synopsis

In the tradition of *Fast Food Nation* and *The Omnivore's Dilemma* comes an indispensable, (New York Newsday) fascinating, and cutting-edge look at the scary truth about what really goes into our food. If a piece of individually wrapped cheese can retain its shape, color, and texture for years, what does it say about the food we eat and feed to our children? Former business reporter and mother Melanie Warner decided to explore that question when she observed the phenomenon of the indestructible cheese. She began an investigative journey that took her to research labs, university food science departments, and factories around the country. What she discovered provides a rare, eye-opening and sometimes disturbing account of what we're really eating. Warner looks at how decades of food science have resulted in the cheapest, most abundant, most addictive, and most nutritionally inferior food in the world, and she uncovers startling evidence about the profound health implications of the packaged and fast foods that we eat on a daily basis. Combining meticulous research, vivid writing, and cultural analysis, Warner blows the lid off the largely undocumented and lightly regulated world of chemically treated and processed foods and lays bare the potential price we may pay for consuming even so-called healthy foods.

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Customer Reviews

I heard the author on the Diane Rehm show--and decided to purchase the Kindle version of the book. At the same time, I also purchased *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us* as he was on the show too. As I got my Kindle book immediately, I began with it first. I'm so glad I did. First

off, the book is just really well written. The author is an excellent writer--and her book is crafted quite well. It draws you in immediately. The whole history of chemicals, additives, food science, and food safety is completely fascinating. I knew none of it. I also had no idea just how much artificial chemically engineered crap goes into our food--nor that the US allows so many additives which Europeans and other countries find harmful. Why??? I realize that we have a laissez-faire attitude to much--but we're talking about our and our children's health. You would think that based on that, we'd be a little bit more concerned with what went into our food and its safety vs. big business and profit. Like so many things in America, profit trumps all. I've learned so much. I had no idea how cereal was produced... veggie burgers... artificial colors/flavors, etc. I had no idea just how prevalent all of the chemical preservatives, enzymes, and additives are in our foods--pretty much everywhere, and not always labeled so that you'd know that. I'm about 3/4s of the way through. It's Sunday night, and I started reading this on Friday night. Today I went to the grocery store--and I was quite wary of purchasing my usual standard food--especially the cereal and other stuff.

Melanie Warner has done a huge public service by writing this book. She delves into the unpronounceable ingredients you read on a package of prepared foods, and more, she traces the progression that prepared foods have taken to become the dominant products in the American diet. The next time you grab a package of cookies, you'll be able to read the ingredient label and really understand what's going into your mouth. These prepared foods now account for SEVENTY-PERCENT of the calories Americans eat. That's astonishing. But look at your aisles in the grocery store to see how many are devoted to prepared food (the majority.) And look at the coupons and sales fliers; most of the coupons are for prepared foods, encouraging the thrifty shopper to put these into their shopping basket. I was absolutely delighted to see that Ms. Warner wrote in depth about "Flav-r-Bites" which are prepared jelly bits that are used instead of blueberries in commercial muffins, whether "fresh-baked" at the bakery or even at home by you (from a mix.) Flav-R-Bites are extruded flavored pectin, artificial flavor, sugar and color that imitate the look of blueberries in baked goods, but are stable on the shelf, cheap to make and 99 out of 100 people can't tell they aren't eating a real blueberry. I knew about these years and years ago, because I used to call on food manufacturing companies to visit their QA/QC labs. While sitting in the lobby waiting for an appointment at a very big-name food company, I read the trade journal and they described these new Flav-R-Bites. The next time I ate a blueberry muffin from the donut shop, I picked apart the blueberry and lo, it was exactly that extruded jelly product. Then I got a mix of "blueberry" muffins, a mix that years ago had a tin of wild Maine blueberries to toss in.

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