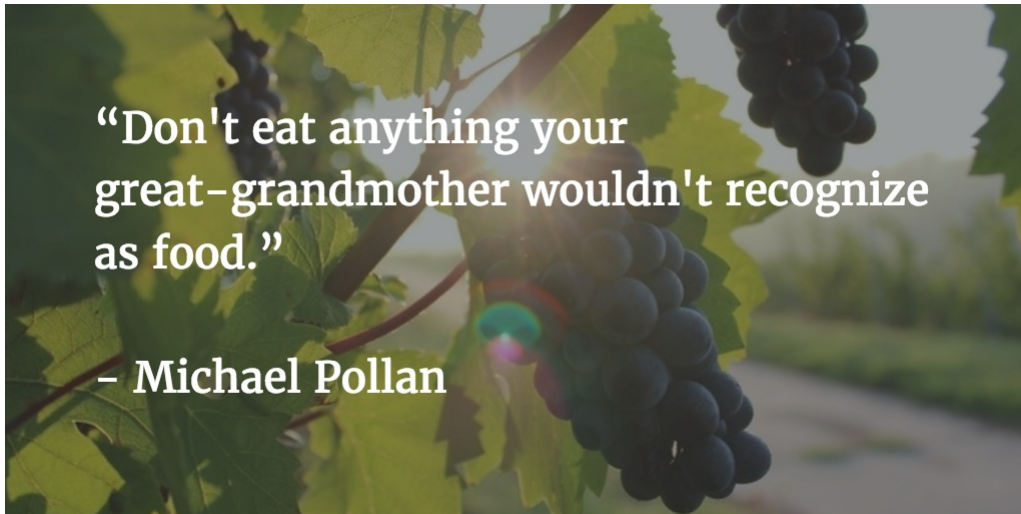


1-Sentence-Summary: *The Omnivore's Dilemma* explains the paradox of food choices we face today, how the industrial revolution changed the way we eat and see food today and which food choices are the most ethical, sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



What should you have for dinner? Simple question, right?

At least it was until a few thousand and even a few hundred years ago. You ate what was available during that season, sold by the farmer that day.

But today everything is available, all the time, wherever you are.

So what do you eat to stay healthy, make economic choices, not hurt the environment and do the right thing?

Michael Pollan helps you answer this now so complicated question in his 2006 book *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, named one of the five best non-fiction books of the year by The New York Times.

Here are 3 lessons you can learn from it:

1. Corn is the root of the problem.
2. Organic often doesn't mean what you think it does.
3. Buy local to win on every level.

Want to improve your food choices? Here we go!

Lesson 1: It all started with corn.

In theory, corn is a great plant.

It's highly adaptable, very resistant, and grows in large quantities fast. When the Europeans first landed in the US and discovered it, it quickly became a household name for farmers.

But you can overdo even the best thing.

Technology has advanced so far that we can now alter plants at the genetic level, and the corn industrial farmers grow now has little to do with its ancestor.

In 1920 a farmer could comfortably produce 20 bushels of corn per acre. That figure has shot to 180 today – a 9x increase!

10 years ago, it cost a farmer \$2.50 to produce a bushel, but due to the already flooded market, buyers only wanted to pay \$1.45.

When the government agreed to match the difference, and thus gave the farmers an artificial profit for producing corn, **it ruined the supply and demand cycle of corn.**

Farmers can make a ton of money from producing corn and continue to grow more and more, even though the market's demand has long been saturated.

The excess corn is what lands in your food in the form of high fructose corn syrup and other highly processed derivatives, and is fed to all kinds of animals, who aren't natural corn eaters, like cows, chicken and even carnivore's like salmon.

Lesson 2: Organic is not as clean as you think it is.

Alright, alright, maybe you knew that already.

At the very least, I'm sure you were aware that the whole processed food industry is not the greenest choice you can make.

But what about organic food?

Originally started as a counter-movement to processed and industrialized food, due to its popularity, **organic food as a label has been swept up by the processed food lobby.**

Plenty of the small farms that came from the organic movement had to either let go of some of their standards in order to supply the growing demand for organic food, or go out of business.

As organic businesses grew, standards were lowered, and **now food companies can cut corners and still get away with labels like "organic" and "free-range".**

For example, would you call 20,000 chickens in a shed with a two-week mini vacation in the tiny back yard free-range?

The food industry would.

And what the hell is “organic high fructose corn syrup”? That stuff is one of the most artificial things ever produced.

But what to do then?

Lesson 3: If you buy locally, you win on all levels.

Two words: **Buy. Locally.**

Get your food from small, local farms, and everyone will win, including you.

Here are several reasons why.

Due to the **reduction in distance that your food travels** until it eventually lands on your plate, less fuel and resources are used, making this the environmentally friendlier alternative.

Economically, **you put money into the hands of the right people**: small businesses. As long as we give the majority of our money to big corporations, they'll be the ones in charge.

The quality of your food is increased, because it's grown in according to the season and natural circumstances on site, which makes pesticides and other artificial support unnecessary.

Ethically, this is a no brainer, and it also **holds your farmer, butcher and baker accountable**. When they know you're passing by their store every day, they're much less likely to mistreat animals or plants, because of their personal relationship with you.

So start by skipping the supermarket once in a while and look at the options right in front of you.

The Omnivore's Dilemma Review

Better eating in a nutshell. Even better: *The Omnivore's Dilemma* does it without telling you to eat a specific diet. Of course there are benefits to eating a more plant-focused diet rather than having meat 7 times a week, but this is none of the books that proclaim one particular diet as the solution (which is BS anyways, by the way).

There are many more eye-opening, sometimes even horrific facts, in both the book and the summary on Blinkist, making this a true wake-up call.

The summary was very well structured, you could sense a common thread being woven well throughout, very good, especially considering the book looks at the problem from 4 different angles.

Thumbs up!

[Read full summary on Blinkist](#)

[Get the book on Amazon](#)

[Learn more about the author](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How it's possible for you to eat fresh Asparagus in the US in January
- Where all the excess corn lands and how it helps food companies overcome the fixed stomach problem
- What a CAFO is and how it brought down the price of meat substantially
- The terrible things that happen in CAFO's and how they make animals, and ultimately us, sick
- What the benefits of organic food are (there sure are some!)
- How management-intensive grazing could easily and sustainably replace the corn craze

Who would I recommend The Omnivore's Dilemma summary to?

The 17 year old who usually doesn't look at food labels when she goes to the supermarket to buy her favorite cereal, the 27 year old millennial, who thinks he's got it figured out by just buying organic, and anyone who buys at the local butchery or bakery in town less than once a week.