

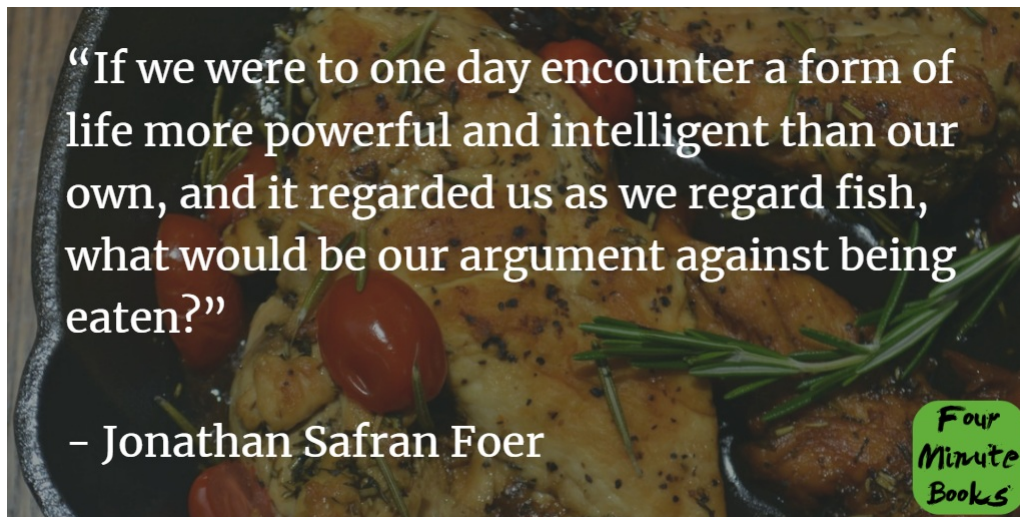
Eating Animals Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Eating Animals reveals and details the true burden of the modern-day meat industry that we all bear as a society: the environmental, the health, and – last but not least – the ethical one.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



As a person who doesn't eat meat moved through life, they often must deal with getting with this question:

What are your reasons for being vegetarian?

The asker is usually interested in whether it's the ethical *or* another argument that is the main motivation for giving up meat. With his book *Eating Animals*, Jonathan Safran Foer is showing us clearly: there are all kinds of reasons for becoming a vegetarian or vegan. And they are all valid.

Foer simply argues that today, there is hardly any other ethical eating choice. But ethics is not all that this is about. We should also recognize two other major consequences that meat production has on the world around us. These are our (consumers') health and environmental issues.

This book may shock and make you feel uncomfortable. At the same time, it is a must-read for anyone who wishes to label themselves as "conscious consumers."

Here are 3 lessons I've learned about the meat industry that make me want to give up animal products forever:

1. What we call "farms" are, in reality, meat factories.
2. Meat from the factories harms our health in the long run.
3. The environmental costs of mass meat production are much bigger than what the planet can bear.

Do you want to learn the truth about the production methods of the meat on your table? Hold tight and let's go!

Lesson 1: In modern times, we don't "raise animals." Instead, we "produce meat."

A lot of meat-eaters these days don't particularly care to know the living conditions of their meat. And if they want to continue eating it – rightly so. If you saw for yourself the production process of the incredibly cheap meat we buy in supermarkets, you'd likely never eat it again.

Children's books often contain pictures of farm animals. In those pictures, cows, chickens, and pigs usually have a big lot to wander around in. They have smiling, caring farmers looking after them. Surprisingly, this is not far from the image many adults also hold in their imagination when they think about animal agriculture.

Now I need to break it to you: nothing could be further from the truth.

With the amount of meat we consume as a society, the process of "raising" animals is more like "producing" them in factories. There, it is all about efficiency, in terms of both time and money. All that matters is to grow animals as fast and cheap as possible. This means that no one really cares about their wellbeing.

Foer gives multiple examples of the treatment of factory animals, but I will mention just a few. Chickens are often kept in overcrowded spaces, with less than a square foot of space per animal. Piglets that don't grow fast enough are being smashed against concrete headfirst. Both chickens and pigs have their beaks and teeth removed so that they don't pick on one another out of frustration.

There are many more ways in which people harm animals just to make the meat business more profitable. But one that is also shooting ourselves in the foot is how we feed them.

Lesson 2: The mass production of meat poses a threat to the consumers' health.

The unethical aspects of modern meat production are at the forefront of Foer's book – but they are not the only reasons you should rethink your meat consumption. If you care about your own health, there are things to consider, too.

The drive for efficiency in the factory farms causes them to treat the livestock and meat with all kinds of sh*t. And, unfortunately, this is quite literal.

Take poultry farms. The chicken meat, after it is disemboweled and sliced, is immersed in what the author calls “fecal soup,” to absorb 20% additional weight. This is a kind of “broth” consists of dead chickens that contains feces and all sorts of pathogens from individual birds. This virtually ensures contaminating the meat that later goes to the supermarkets.

And indeed – one consumer report has shown that 83% of chicken meat available in stores contained either salmonella or campylobacter.

Another aspect of how mass-production meat makes us sick is the use of antibiotics. Because factory farms widely overuse them – often not to treat diseases, but “provisionally” – there are likely to be more and more antibiotic-resistant pathogens emerging from those farms.

Because many of them can transmit from animals to humans – this puts us at a higher risk of a global pandemic.

Lesson 3: Animal farming in its current form destroys the global ecosystem on an unimaginable scale.

When talking about climate change and other environmental problems, we are used to blaming most of them on fossil fuels or consumer choices such as “too many cars.”

But did you know that animal agriculture is responsible for 40% more greenhouse gas emissions than the world's transportation? In other words, it accounts for up to 18% of all global emissions.

This, however, is only one of the many environmental threats the meat industry today causes. **Animal farming in its current form is more than unsustainable – it is posing a risk to much of the life on Earth.**

One example is animal feces that are an obvious result of keeping livestock. In small amounts, they can be a valuable fertilizer. However, in the amounts that factory farms are currently producing them, they are a threat to whole ecosystems and communities.

Foer says that animal excrements are 160 times more toxic than raw municipal sewage. When such a polluting material, in large quantities, enters seas and rivers (which it constantly does), this is obviously no good news to all the water creatures living there. But

people living near repositories of animal waste suffer, too.

It is common for families living close to hog farms to report frequent headaches, nosebleeds and even lung burns. That's all due to the toxic substances being released into the atmosphere from animal feces.

Eating Animals Review

Eating Animals is shocking – but a must-read to anyone who cares even the slightest bit about the environment, health and animal suffering. Be prepared for some really uncomfortable emotions accompanying your lecture. That said, Foer is also a novelist – so his narrative, as disturbing as it is for obvious reasons, is also entertaining, well-written and sometimes even humorous.

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Who would I recommend the Eating Animals Solution summary to?

The 44-year-old meat eater who is considering cutting down on animal products, the 50-year-old restaurant owner who wants to make their eatery more vegetarian-friendly and to anyone who is interested in the truth behind the meat industry today.