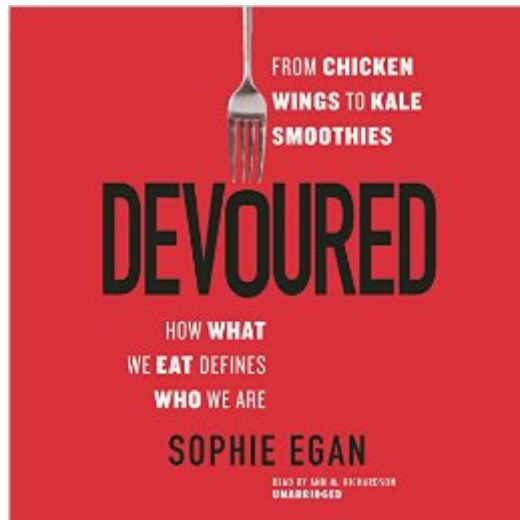


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Devoured: From Chicken Wings To Kale Smoothies -- How What We Eat Defines Who We Are



Synopsis

[Read by Ann M. Richardson] A provocative look at how and what Americans eat and why -- a flavorful blend of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, *Salt Sugar Fat*, and *Freakonomics* that reveals how the way we live shapes the way we eat. Food writer and Culinary Institute of America program director Sophie Egan takes readers on an eye-opening journey through the American food psyche, examining the connections between the values that define our national character -- work, freedom, and progress -- and our eating habits, the good and the bad. Egan explores why these values make for such an unstable, and often unhealthy, food culture and, paradoxically, why they also make America's cuisine so great. Egan raises a host of intriguing questions: Why does McDonald's have 107 items on its menu? Why are breakfast sandwiches, protein bars, and gluten-free anything so popular? Will bland, soulless meal replacements like Soylent revolutionize our definition of a meal? The search for answers takes her across the culinary landscape, from the prioritization of convenience over health to the unintended consequences of "perks" like free meals for employees; from the American obsession with "having it our way" to the surge of Starbucks, Chipotle, and other chains individualizing the eating experience; from high culture -- artisan and organic and what exactly "natural" means -- to low culture -- the sale of 100 million Taco Bell Doritos Locos Tacos in ten weeks. She also looks at how America's cuisine -- like the nation itself -- has been shaped by diverse influences from across the globe. *Devoured* weaves together insights from the fields of psychology, anthropology, food science, and behavioral economics as well as myriad examples from daily life to create a powerful and unique look at food in America.

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Customer Reviews

Devoured is worth devouring, although Sophie Egan's answer to her book's subtitle, How WHAT We EAT Defines WHO We Are, is, at times, uneven. That's understandable as this is a first book and one that explores a complex topic. Bottom-line: it's an entertaining, informative, and above all, thought-provocative book. Devoured is well-researched and worthy of copious note-taking. Highlights follow, including Egan's delicious proclivity for using or coining a new word or phrase to better explain or frame up what already exists in America's ever-evolving eating behaviors. Table of Contents: Yes, read the teaser blurbs such as 40% skip breakfast while 40% of us also eat lunch at our desks. Introduction: The American Food Psyche focuses on THE why we eat the way we do (convenience, health, novelty, personalization, and more) as it also slices into America's food culture. Chapter 1: The Muddle of the Modern Meal is driven by our desire for convenience. Egan's spin is jarring in How we define what is a meal and when is a meal, including how people are often assembling snack foods to collectively equal a meal (or on many mornings, what's called a snackfast). Chapter 2: Food at Work Said simply, many of us all but live at work so we're eating more at work, yet just one in five workers in North America takes regular lunch breaks away from their desks. Office microwaves rarely idle for long as they've changed everything, including the selection for unscrupulous fridge thievery. Chapter 3: Having It Our Way Think personalized and individualized eating, including a chefing your directed restaurant order. Americans spend less time eating: 74 minutes a day, or 27 minutes less than the average in other OECD countries.

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