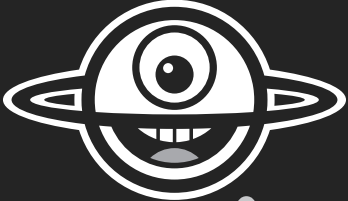


• burritos • bowls • quesadillas • home-made soups and salads • kids' menu • organic juices • real fruit smoothies • micro-brewed sodas and beers • home-baked cookies and pies • sustainable and locally grown produce

Mindful of Every Mouthful



Laughing Planet Café

Out-of-this-world food that's wholesome, fast, affordable and portable.

760 Blair Blvd Eugene 541.868.0668	4110 SE Woodstock Portland 503.788.2921	3320 SE Belmont Portland 503.235.6472	3765 N Mississippi Portland 503.467.4146	922 NW 21st Portland 503.445.1319
--	---	---	--	---

• flash-steaming • a full dollop of humor and irreverence to aid digestion

REGIONAL ITALIAN COOKING IN THE REGION OF OREGON



FRESH, LOCAL AND
ORGAINIC
INGREDIENTS.

PRODUCE FROM
OUR OWN FARM.

FOR 37 YEARS,
EUGENE'S CLASSIC
ITALIAN SICILIAN
RESTAURANT.

Mazzi's
Life is good.

3377 E. AMAZON • WWW.MAZZIS.COM • 687-2252

DISCOVER



BEHIND MAZZI'S
NOW SERVING LUNCH
7 DAYS A WEEK

CHOW! WINTER 2008

Food, Not Fads

FIGHTING THE NUTRITIONISTS BY MOLLY TEMPLETON

IN DEFENSE OF FOOD: An Eater's Manifesto by Michael Pollan. The Penguin Press, 2008. Hardcover, \$21.95.

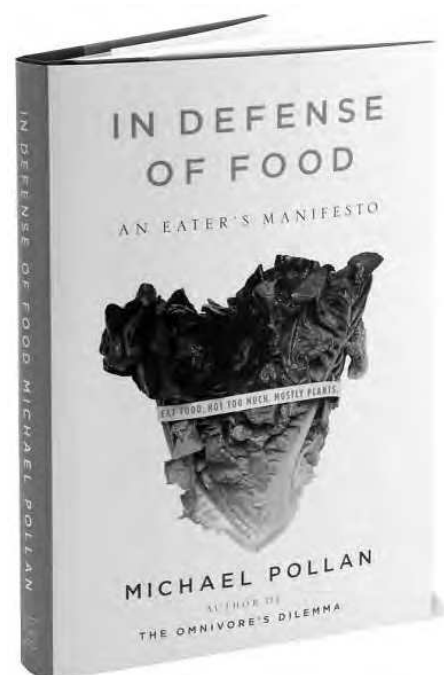
At first, it seems like Michael Pollan has shown his whole hand with the first few words of his new book, which appear on the cover as well as at the start of his introduction: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." It's a thesis statement that seems, momentarily, to make its own argument, for what else is there to say? Plenty, as it turns out. Pollan, who has broadened the discussion of food and food production in the last few years with his 2006 book *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and numerous articles in *The New York Times*, has taken his interest in how and what we eat and shifted his focus somewhat. Where *Omnivore's* explored different lines of food production, from industrial to small farm to hunting and foraging one's own dinner, *In Defense of Food* looks at the opposing forces that have shaped the American (and, increasingly, world) diet in the last century. And once he's taken those forces apart, Pollan puts food back together again — or at least puts in back into perspective.

But first, he has at nutritionism, the word he uses for the way people often look at food as the sum of its nutritional parts. It's a long and fascinating trip through government regulations and lobbies, "macronutrients at war" (Fight carbs! Fight fats!) and the life of processed foods (one of Pollan's funniest and simplest suggestions is to assume that the more nutritional claims a food product has on its packaging, the less likely it is to be actual food). In his patient, engrossing style, Pollan finds the fascinating threads of narrative in the various claims, studies, trends and missteps of nutritionism and food science, gradually building a compelling argument for *not* fussing over carbs, fats and proteins, vitamins and minerals, supplements and ratios.

When he's done with nutritionism, Pollan moves on to part two of his argument, "The Western Diet and the Diseases of Civilization." The Western diet, he shows over and over again, is unhealthy, regardless of exactly what makes it that way; traditional diets are healthier, which should be somewhat obvious when we consider that people have been living on them for many years. But sometimes it takes a book — and a captivating one, at that — to tell the story in a way that makes the full picture stick in one's head. For the large part, in this country, our crops are monocultures, our food overly refined, our consumption of whole foods down, our eating habits discombobulated.

Of course, to some people none of this is news, but Pollan's not necessarily writing for those of us who already subscribe to CSAs and get our produce from the farmers' market (though even if you are already so enlightened, there's plenty of fascinating detail and history of the food industry in this book to keep you reading). His accessible style, healthy dose of skepticism and nonjudgmental tone seem designed to lure in new readers with every page. And here, Pollan isn't simply reporting on what he's learned; in the book's final section, he offers basic suggestions for how to put into practice the kind of eating that doesn't rely on nutritional data or overly processed items. This, then, is where those first seven words come back into play, but elaborated upon. Some of his suggestions will require a certain amount of available cash, but others have more to do with mentality — with making and taking time to care about what we're eating — than with funding. Eat food — whole foods, real foods, foods that your great-grandmother would recognize. Eat more leaves than seeds. Choose quality over quantity and eat actual meals, at a table, preferably with others. By eating things that are food, not "food," he argues, we don't have to worry about whether or not what's in them is good for us; the health is built in. "To reclaim this much control over one's food," Pollan writes, "to take it back from industry and science, is no small thing; indeed, in our time cooking from scratch and growing your own food qualify as subversive acts."

Let's get subversive.



blogs.eugeneweekly.com