# What to Eat:
An aisle-by-aisle guide to savvy food choices and good eating

by Marion Nestle

About this Guide

The questions and discussion topics that follow are designed to enhance your reading of Marion Nestle's *What to Eat*. We hope they will enrich your experience of this eye-opening guide to what you need to know to cut through nutrition confusion and make sensible food choices.
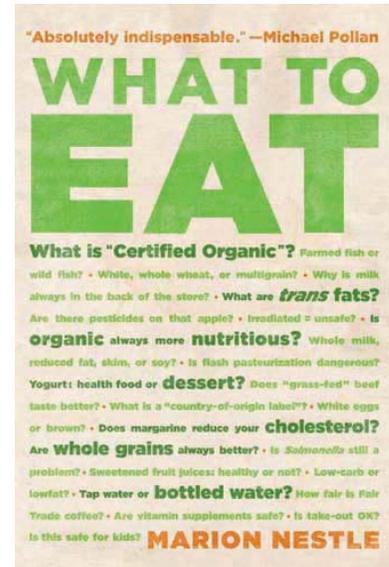
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Introduction

These days, food choices can seem impossibly complicated. Health is only one criterion; others include taste, price, and the environmental impact of food. Many consumers care deeply about issues ranging from fighting obesity or boosting immune systems to sustainable agriculture and the way food animals are raised. All of these issues can make food choices feel overwhelming. Award-winning nutritionist Marion Nestle now brings much-needed clarity to a topic we all confront on a daily basis: What are the best choices for our bodies, our palates, and the world we live in when it comes to food? She consulted store managers and farmers, inspectors and leading scientists, to create *What to Eat*, a friendly, hype-free, and fascinating guide to eating well, packed with fresh, surprising information about everything you might want to know about the foods you buy. Just as *Jane Brody's Nutrition Book* provided break-through insight into the world of nutrition more than two decades ago, *What to Eat* updates these timely topics to bring us the answers we crave.

Questions for Discussion

1. How have mealtimes and snacks changed since you were a child? Are your eating habits different from those of your parents? In what ways have they improved or gotten worse?

2. Did anything surprise you about what is involved in bringing foods to market and selling them? Did anything in what you read change your opinion about the role of food companies in government advice or action about food?

3. What were the most enlightening or reassuring facts you discovered in What to Eat?

4. Chapter five provides evidence that fresh fruits and vegetables are quite affordable, contradicting the frequent claim that Americans don't eat enough fresh produce because it costs too much. How does this finding compare with your own experience? What do you think accounts for any differences you observe?

5. Did reading *What to Eat* change your understanding of the meaning of terms such as "organic" and "trans fat" and "natural"? What are your top priorities when making food choices? What are the best ways to determine whether certain foods really do meet your criteria?

Questions for Discussion

18. Would you describe yourself as an optimist or a pessimist when it comes to eating well? What might need to happen to make you feel more optimistic?

19. Some readers have reacted to *What to Eat* by losing weight without even trying. What principles of weight loss does the book propose? What dietary changes might you make as a result of reading this book?

20. One of Nestle's goals is to restore the joy of eating. Can American culture reconcile fears of food with the sheer pleasure of eating well?

Praise

"[This] book is for anyone who has read a food label; been annoyed at how often their children nag them for certain cereals; wondered about the difference between natural and organic; or questioned who is minding the store when it comes to nutrition and food safety." —Marian Burros, ***The New York Times***

"Accessible, reliable and comprehensive." —Judith Weinraub, ***The Washington Post***

"Nestle is simply one of the nation's smartest and most influential authorities on nutrition and food policy." —Carol Ness, ***San Francisco Chronicle***

"The most comprehensive guide to the political and nutritional choices we make shopping for food." —Susan Salter Reynolds, ***Los Angeles Times***

"When it comes to the increasingly treacherous landscape of the American supermarket, with its marketing hype and competing health claims, Marion Nestle is an absolutely indispensable guide: knowledgeable, eminently sane—and wonderful company, too." —Michael Pollan, author of *The Botany of Desire*

"The industry wants you to believe there are no good foods or bad foods. Well, that's not true. And I can't think of anyone who knows the difference better than Marion Nestle." —Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*

"Meticulously researched, thorough, and indispensable—Marion Nestle's *What to Eat* delivers on its title. It's a reliable, riveting guide to the amazing truth about what we're sold by the American food distribution system. Refreshingly rigorous and fun to read." —Alice Waters, founder and proprietor of Chez Panisse and author of *Chez Panisse Café Cookbook*

About the Author

Marion Nestle has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the James Beard Foundation—the food world's highest honor—as well as the foundation's book prize for *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. She is also the author of *Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism* and was featured in the movie *Super Size Me*. A native New Yorker, she raised her family in California and now lives in Greenwich Village, where she teaches at New York University. Visit her websites at www.foodpolitics.com and www.whattoeatbook.com.