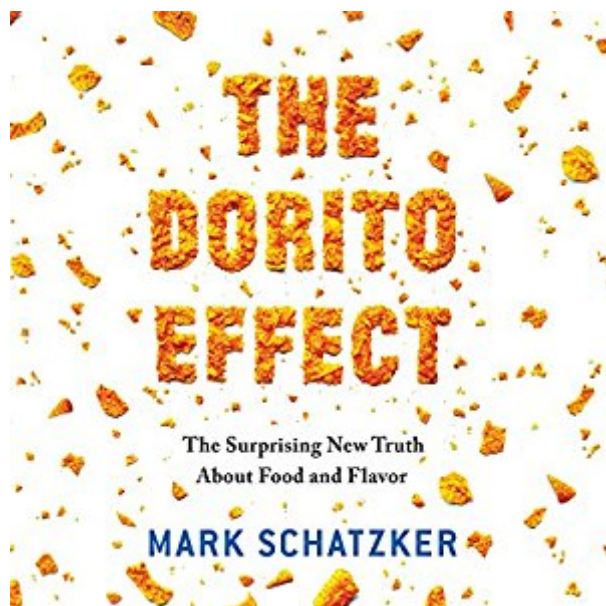


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The Dorito Effect: The Surprising New Truth About Food And Flavor



Synopsis

In *The Dorito Effect*, Mark Schatzker shows us how our approach to the nation's number-one public health crisis has gotten it wrong. The epidemics of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes are not tied to the overabundance of fat or carbs. Instead we have been led astray by the growing divide between flavor - the tastes we crave - and the underlying nutrition. Since the late 1940s, we have been slowly leeching flavor out of the food we grow. Simultaneously we have taken great leaps forward in technology, allowing us to produce in the lab the very flavors that are being lost on the farm. Thanks to this largely invisible epidemic, seemingly healthy food is becoming more like junk food: highly craveable but nutritionally empty. We have unknowingly interfered with an ancient chemical language - flavor - that evolved to guide our nutrition, not destroy it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Dorito Effect by Mark Schatzker is a very highly recommended, well researched account that addresses the cause of the health crisis today as being a direct result of what we have done to our food. In an effort to increase size, and production, we have taken the natural flavor out of food. Our bodies naturally crave flavors that the current food isn't providing so we eat more trying to fill the flavor void we're missing. Focusing on mainly chicken and tomatoes, Schatzker does an excellent job tracing how the change in our food happened and the results. There is a complex relationship between flavor and nutrition in food and we have diluted the flavor to increase size and production. Chicken today doesn't taste anything like the chicken of the past. Tomatoes today are mostly water.

"The rise in obesity is the predictable result of the rise in manufactured deliciousness. Everything we add to food just makes us want it more." Schatzker points out that the big food companies have "created the snack equivalent of crystal meth and gotten us all hooked." Not only is more and more manufactured flavor being added to things, the availability of the food with enhanced flavors is more available."The Dorito Effect, very simply, is what happens when food gets blander and flavor technology gets better. This book is about how and why that took place. It's also about the consequences, which include obesity and metabolic disturbance along with a cultural love-hate obsession with food. This book argues that we need to begin understanding food through the same lens by which it is experienced: how it tastes. The food crisis we're spending so much time and money on might be better thought of as a large-scale flavor disorder.

As someone who absolutely loved Schatzker's Steak book, I found this book disappointing. The parts about parasitic wasps and livestock and flavor are really cool, and the style of the book is written to be very engaging and easy to read for most people (who should definitely read it!). I think his advice about eating real foods for true flavor, to listen to what your taste is telling you, is very sound and wise. I thought it was strange that it was never mentioned how MSG is used to create obesity in lab rats for study, or how flavor chemicals like aspartame and monosodium glutamate actually damage parts of the brain that are responsible for appetite control - sometimes permanently. It seems particularly poignant in a book about flavor chemicals and obesity. While reading the Steak book, it seemed that he really got it about fats, but this book goes back to the low-fat, just-eat-lots-of-veggies paradigm. It was kind of an attempt at a Michael Pollan-esque book, although I do appreciate that he also wrote about the good chicken. It's not true that feeding pigs fat will make them fat - maybe at a certain point, but the best way to fatten hogs is with skimmed milk (I've seen it - I have a microdairy and I feed our pigs skimmed milk). They just don't fatten up the same way with whole milk. And I couldn't believe his fancy flavor feast featured extra-virgin canola oil! I would have been impressed if it had raw grassfed butter, real olive oil or lard from pastured pigs, or even fresh-made coconut oil. Why rapeseed? I don't get it. I also feel very skeptical about his suggestion to just engineer better-tasting plants.

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