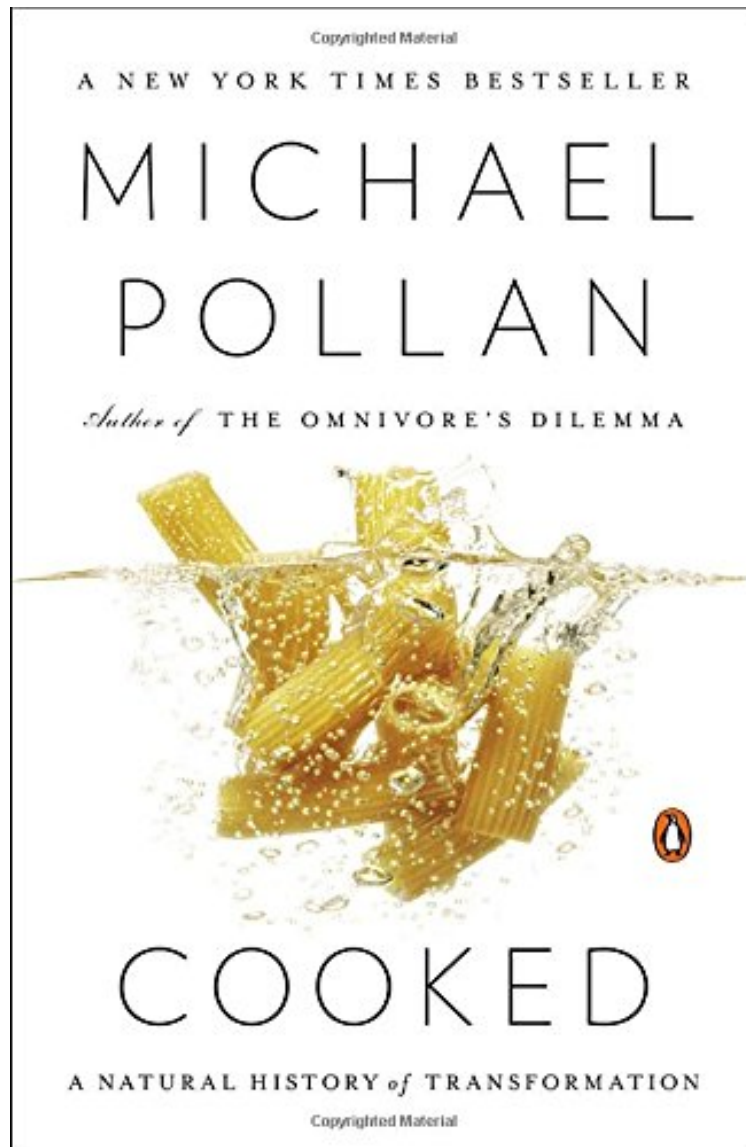


(Free) Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation

Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation

Michael Pollan

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#38784 in Books Michael Pollan 2014-04-29 2014-04-29 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.40 x 1.10 x 5.50l, 1.00 #File Name: 0143125338480 pages Michale Pollan strikes again! This time with COOKED! | File size: 79.Mb

Michael Pollan : Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It got me cooking again By D. A. Sawyer This is not a book for the quick cook, someone who just wants to get the job done with minimal time or fuss. This is a book for a person who is curious about cooking, its history, some of the chemistry, the basic concepts behind it. It's for the person who is

willing and able to get excited about cooking. The book's organization into four sections based upon the classical physical elements, while not perfect (as Pollan himself notes when he points out that beer, filed under the "earth" category as a fermented food, actually makes use of all four elements), is nonetheless pleasing and somewhat helpful. The four basic elements he lists are fire, water, air, and earth, with the four basic preparation techniques being barbecue/grilling (fire), stewing/braising (water), leavening (air), and fermentation (earth). He interviews and learns from cooks specialized in each of these areas, and passes their knowledge on to his readers. He includes information from the natural sciences, about the biological and chemical mechanisms underlying the transformations we call "cooking". He goes into various theories as to how various forms of cooking came about, including a fairly extensive section about what is called the "Cooking Hypothesis" of human evolution.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well written, thought provoking, entertaining, fascinating. By Eedee One of the better books I've read this year, both in terms of writing style and content. The author includes scientific/biological facts as well as philosophical/religious musings and interesting bits of cultural history. Not only is it a highly entertaining read, but it has both inspired me to try new ways of cooking and caused me to rethink the food I serve to my family. This is not a diatribe against the typical American diet, but rather an exploration of what cooking can be. This book is a nice complement to *Salt, Sugar Fat* (<http://www.com/Salt-Sugar-Fat-Giants-Hooked/dp/1400069807>). Of the two, I enjoyed this one more, but I highly recommend both. There is little (though some) overlap. I suggest reading this one second. *Salt, Sugar Fat* helped me understand why our diet looks like it does today, whereas *Cooked* inspired me (in a positive way) to make changes to how I eat.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good writer, good subject. By Lloyd Walker For those familiar with Michael Pollan, this is certainly more of the same. Same good writing and same focus on food, which Pollan rightly recognizes as a key part of human development and culture. Others have criticized this work as tedious and repetitive, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. Granted, it is not a pot-boiling page-turner. It is a well researched, thought provoking, look at the creation and evolution of ways to transform raw plant and animal material into tasty and healthy nutrition for the human animal. He also highlights the cultural and social aspects of cooking as key elements of our human development. Both the food transformation and the cultural/social aspects of cooking are losing importance in western societies. Pollan argues this is to our collective detriment. Reading this thoughtful book may not make you change your food purchase and consumption habits -- and it's certainly not likely to make you a master chef, baker, brewer, etc. -- but it will give you a new perspective on the place that cooking has held in our past. A place that may or may not remain so important in the future.

****Now a docu-series streaming on Netflix, starring Pollan as he explores how cooking transforms food and shapes our world. Oscar-winning filmmaker Alex Gibney executive produces the four-part series based on Pollan's book, and each episode will focus on a different natural element: fire, water, air, and earth. ****In *Cooked*, Michael Pollan explores the previously uncharted territory of his own kitchen. Here, he discovers the enduring power of the four classical elements: fire, water, air, and earth to transform the stuff of nature into delicious things to eat and drink. Apprenticing himself to a succession of culinary masters, Pollan learns how to grill with fire, cook with liquid, bake bread, and ferment everything from cheese to beer. Each section of *Cooked* tracks Pollan's effort to master a single classic recipe using one of the four elements. A North Carolina barbecue pit master tutors him in the primal magic of fire; a Chez Panisse-trained cook schools him in the art of braising; a celebrated baker teaches him how air transforms grain and water into a fragrant loaf of bread; and finally, several mad-genius fermentos (a tribe that includes brewers, cheese makers, and all kinds of picklers) reveal how fungi and bacteria can perform the most amazing alchemies of all. The reader learns alongside Pollan, but the lessons move beyond the practical to become an investigation of how cooking involves us in a web of social and ecological relationships. Cooking, above all, connects us. The effects of not cooking are similarly far reaching. Relying upon corporations to process our food means we consume large quantities of fat, sugar, and salt; disrupt an essential link to the natural world; and weaken our relationships with family and friends. In fact, *Cooked* argues, taking back control of cooking may be the single most important step anyone can take to help make the American food system healthier and more sustainable. Reclaiming cooking as an act of enjoyment and self-reliance, learning to perform the magic of these everyday transformations, opens the door to a more nourishing life.

.com An Best Book of the Month, April 2013: Who has untangled the nature of modern America's relationship with food more effectively than Michael Pollan? After sharing the experience of growing his own food in *Second Nature*, he illuminated how our appetites drive the evolution of edible plants with *The Botany of Desire*. Then he pondered *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, weighing our precarious food chain and popularizing the pleasures of eating local; In *Defense of Food* and *Food Rules* distilled his conclusions into a manifesto and a manual. With *Cooked*, he closes the seed-to-table loop with a passionate exploration of the satisfying transformation of grilling, braising, baking, and fermenting--and their primal roots. Learning to cook elevated humans from lone animals into increasingly intelligent, civilized groups, and though we spend scant time doing real cooking, we've become obsessed with watching people cook--a paradox that points to longing for a lost experience. Through his own experiences making and enjoying food

with pit masters, chefs, bakers, and fermentos, he retraces our path to connection with real ingredients and health for people and planet. Whether you're sympathetic or skeptical, you can't help but appreciate Pollan's genius for conveying the elemental appeal of making a meal. --Mari Malcolm From Booklist *Starred * Pollan's newest treatise on how food reaches the world's tables delves into the history of how humankind turns raw ingredients into palatable and nutritious food. To bring some sense of order to this vast subject, he resurrects classical categories of fire, water, air, and earth. Pollan visits pit masters to learn what constitutes authentic barbecue. An Italian-trained Iranian American teaches him the subtleties of proper cooking in pots, how to coax maximum flavor from humble vegetables, herbs, meats, and water. Baking trains Pollan to watch, listen, and feel the action of living yeasts in doughs. The harnessing of fungi and molds to ferment sauerkraut and beer and produce cheeses illuminates the fine and ever-shifting boundaries between tastiness and rot and how the human palate can be trained. Four recipes accompany the text, and an extensive bibliography offers much deeper exploration. Pollan's peerless reputation as one of America's most compelling expositors of food and human sustainability will boost demand. --Mark Knoblauch From Bookforum Even when he's championing his ethical concerns, Pollan is a researcher, a prodigious gatherer and synthesizer of vast reams of information. Having thoroughly scrutinized every other link in the food chain, he finally turns his skills to the one link missing from his repertoire. And in the process, he learned to cook. The chapters and their signature recipes are meant to stand in for the traditional four elements (water, earth, air, and fire). And each of these natural forces, Pollan writes, signifies one of the "great transformations of nature into culture we call cooking." The author's project is, in fact, nearly as all-encompassing and essential as the elements themselves, ranging across several disciplines, embracing perspectives both stringently objective and deeply personal, and introducing us to a novel's worth of colorful characters whom he enlists to teach him the cooking method at hand. *Cooked* is a potentially seductive invitation to discover or rediscover our most primal connection to the natural world, and it will likely induce more than a few readers to dust off their little-used pots and pans and to brush up on some essential knife skills. The only problem with *Cooked* is that, at a length of 450-some pages, it'll be quite a while before you get back into the kitchen.

Linda Delibero