

Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us

By Michael Moss

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NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY

The Atlantic • *The Huffington Post* • *Men's Journal* • *MSN (U.K.)* • *Kirkus Reviews* • *Publishers Weekly*

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • WINNER OF THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION AWARD FOR WRITING AND LITERATURE

Every year, the average American eats thirty-three pounds of cheese and seventy pounds of sugar. Every day, we ingest 8,500 milligrams of salt, double the recommended amount, almost none of which comes from the shakers on our table. It comes from processed food, an industry that hauls in \$1 trillion in annual sales. In *Salt Sugar Fat*, Pulitzer Prize–winning investigative reporter Michael Moss shows how we ended up here. Featuring examples from Kraft, Coca-Cola, Lunchables, Frito-Lay, Nestlé, Oreos, Capri Sun, and many more, Moss’s explosive, empowering narrative is grounded in meticulous, eye-opening research. He takes us into labs where scientists calculate the “bliss point” of sugary beverages, unearths marketing techniques taken straight from tobacco company playbooks, and talks to concerned insiders who make startling confessions. Just as millions of “heavy users” are addicted to salt, sugar, and fat, so too are the companies that peddle them. You will never look at a nutrition label the same way again.

Praise for *Salt Sugar Fat*

“[Michael] Moss has written a *Fast Food Nation* for the processed food industry. Burrowing deep inside the big food manufacturers, he discovered how junk food is formulated to make us eat more of it and, he argues persuasively, actually to addict us.”—**Michael Pollan**


“If you had any doubt as to the food industry’s complicity in our obesity epidemic, it will evaporate when you read this book.”—*The Washington Post*

“Vital reading for the discerning food consumer.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

“The chilling story of how the food giants have seduced everyone in this country . . . Michael Moss understands a vital and terrifying truth: that we are not just eating fast food when we succumb to the siren song of sugar, fat, and salt. We are fundamentally changing our lives—and the world around us.”—**Alice Waters**

“Propulsively written [and] persuasively argued . . . an exactingly researched, deeply reported work of advocacy journalism.”—*The Boston Globe*

“A remarkable accomplishment.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

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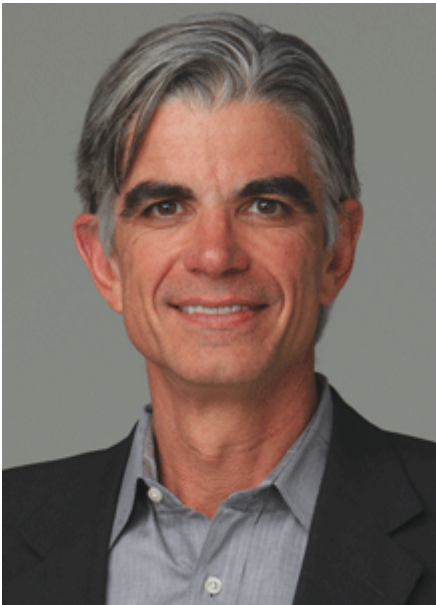
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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Q&A with Michael Moss



Q. How did you land on salt, sugar, and fat as your way to write about the industry? Why these three ingredients?

A. I'd been investigating a surge in deadly outbreaks of E. coli in meat when an industry source, a microbiologist, suggested that if I wanted to see an even bigger public health hazard, I should look at what food companies were *intentionally* adding to their products, starting with salt. And sure enough, when I looked at this--by gaining access to high level industry officials and a trove of sensitive, internal records--a window opened on how aggressive the industry was wielding not only salt, but sugar and fat, too. These are the pillars of processed foods, the three ingredients without which there would be no processed foods. Salt, sugar and fat drive consumption by adding flavor and allure. But surprisingly, they also mask bitter flavors that develop in the manufacturing process. They enable these foods to sit in warehouses or on the grocery shelf for months. And, most critically to the industry's financial success, they are very inexpensive.

Q. So, how big is the processed food industry, exactly? What kind of scale are we talking about here?

A. Huge. Grocery sales now top \$1 trillion a year in the U.S., with more than 300 manufacturers employing 1.4 million workers, or 12 percent of all American manufacturing jobs. Global sales exceed \$3 trillion. But the figure I find most revealing is 60,000: That's the number of different products found on the shelves of our largest supermarkets.

Q. How did this get so big?

A. The food processing industry is more than a century old--if you count the invention of breakfast cereals--so it's been steady growth. But things really took off in the 1950s with the promotion of convenience foods whose design and marketing was aimed at the increasing numbers of families with both parents working

outside the home. The industry's expansion, since then, has been entirely unrestrained. While food safety is heavily regulated, the government has been industry's best friend and partner in encouraging Americans to become more dependent on processed foods.

Q. What three things should a health-conscious supermarket shopper keep in mind?

A. The most alluring products--those with the highest amounts of salt, sugar and fat--are strategically placed at eye-level on the grocery shelf. You typically have to stoop down to find, say, plain oatmeal. (Healthier products are generally up high or down low.) Companies also play the better-nutrition card by plastering their packaging with terms like "all natural," "contains whole grains," "contains real fruit juice," and "lean," which belie the true contents of the products. Reading labels is not easy. Only since the 1990s have the manufacturers even been required to reveal the true salt, sugar, fat and caloric loads of their products, which are itemized in a box called the "nutrient facts." But one game that many companies still play is to divide these numbers in half, or even thirds, by reporting this critical information *per serving*--which are typically tiny portions. In particular, they do this for cookies and chips, knowing that most people can't resist eating the entire three-serving bag. Check it out sometime. See how many "servings" that little bag of chips contains.

From [Booklist](#)

The U.S. has the highest rate of obesity in the world, much of it due to the abundance of cheap, calorie-rich, processed food. Food companies manipulate our biological desires to scientifically engineer foods that induce cravings to overeat, using terms like mouth feel for fats and bliss point for sugars to tinker with formulations that will trigger the optimum food high. Coke even refers to their best customers as heavy users. Moss portrays how the industry discovered the allure of added sugar in the 1900s, and has been jacking up the levels ever since, without regard for consumer health, in everything from soda to breakfast cereals to instant pudding, in a race for market share. The food industry is not about to change, but this book is a wake-up call to the issues and tactics at play and to the fact that we are not helpless in facing them down. Moss is an investigative reporter with the New York Times; he won a Pulitzer Prize in 2010 for his investigation of the dangers of contaminated meat. --David Siegfried

Review

"As a feat of reporting and a public service, *Salt Sugar Fat* is a remarkable accomplishment."—*The New York Times Book Review*

"[Michael] Moss has written a *Fast Food Nation* for the processed food industry. Burrowing deep inside the big food manufacturers, he discovered how junk food is formulated to make us eat more of it and, he argues persuasively, actually to addict us."—**Michael Pollan**

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"Propulsively written [and] persuasively argued . . . an exactingly researched, deeply reported work of advocacy journalism."—*The Boston Globe*

"[An] eye-popping exposé . . . Moss's vivid reportage remains alive to the pleasures of junk—'the heated fat swims over the tongue to send signals of joy to the brain'—while shrewdly analyzing the manipulative profiteering behind them. The result is a mouth-watering, gut-wrenching look at the food we hate to

love.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“Revelatory . . . a shocking, galvanizing manifesto against the corporations manipulating nutrition to fatten their bottom line—one of the most important books of the year.”—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“What happens when one of the country’s great investigative reporters infiltrates the most disastrous cartel of modern times: a processed food industry that’s making a fortune by slowly poisoning an unwitting population? You get this terrific, powerfully written book, jammed with startling disclosures, jaw-dropping confessions and, importantly, the charting of a path to a better, healthier future. This book should be read by anyone who tears a shiny wrapper and opens wide. That’s all of us.”—**Ron Suskind, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and the Education of a President***

“In this meticulously researched book, Michael Moss tells the chilling story of how the food giants have seduced everyone in this country. He understands a vital and terrifying truth: that we are not just eating fast food when we succumb to the siren song of sugar, fat, and salt. We are fundamentally changing our lives—and the world around us.”—**Alice Waters**

“*Salt Sugar Fat* is a breathtaking feat of reporting. Michael Moss was able to get executives of the world’s largest food companies to admit that they have only one job—to maximize sales and profits—and to reveal how they deliberately entice customers by stuffing their products with salt, sugar, and fat. This is a truly important book, and anyone reading it will understand why food corporations cannot be trusted to value health over profits and why we all need to recognize and resist food marketing every time we grocery shop or vote.”—**Marion Nestle, author of *Food Politics* and *What to Eat***

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nancy Sanchez:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children till adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important usually. The book *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us* has been making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The e-book *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us* is not only giving you much more new information but also for being your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship with all the book *Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*. You never really feel lose out for everything in case you read some books.

Michelle Dewees:

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Michael Beebe:

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