

YOUNG READERS EDITION

The

Omnivore's Dilemma

THE SECRETS BEHIND
WHAT YOU EAT



MICHAEL POLLAN

BASED ON THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER



How Corn Took Over America

A FIELD OF CORN

The average supermarket doesn't seem much like a field of corn.

Take a look around one. What do you see? There's a large, air-conditioned room. There are long aisles and shelves piled high with boxes and cans. There are paper goods and diapers and magazines. But that's not all. Look again. Somewhere, behind the brightly colored packaging, underneath the labels covered with information, there is a mountain of corn.

You may not be able to see it, but it's there.

I'm not talking about the corn in the produce section. That's easy to recognize. In the spring and summer, the green ears of corn sit out in plain view with all the other fruits and vegetables. You can see a stack of ears next to the eggplants, onions, apples, bananas, and potatoes. But that's not a mountain of corn, is it?

Keep looking. Go through produce to the back of the supermarket and you'll find the meats. There's corn here too, but

Maltodextrin? Monosodium glutamate? Ascorbic acid? What are those things? What about lecithin and mono-, di-, and triglycerides? They are all made from corn. The golden food coloring? Made from corn. Even the citric acid that keeps the nugget "fresh" is made from corn.

If you wash down your chicken nuggets with almost any soft drink, you are drinking corn with your corn. Since the 1980s almost all sodas and most of the fruit drinks sold in the supermarket are sweetened with something called high-fructose corn syrup.

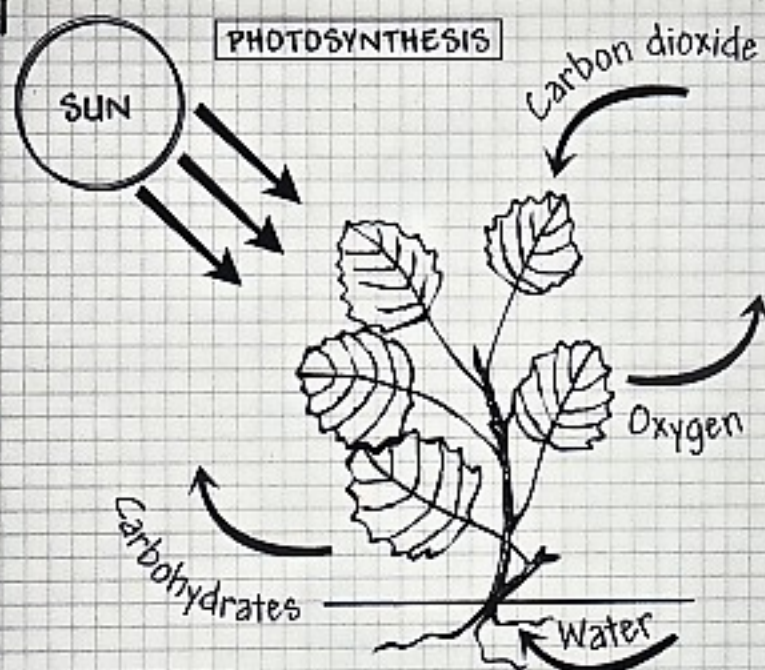
Read the label on any processed food, and corn is what you'll find. Corn is in the non-dairy creamer and the Cheez Whiz, the frozen yogurt and the TV dinner, the canned fruit and the ketchup. It's in the candy, the cake mixes, the mayonnaise, mustard, hot dogs and bologna, the salad dressings and even in some vitamins. (Yes, it's in a Twinkie too.)

There are some forty-five thousand items in the average American supermarket and more than a quarter of them now contain corn. This goes for the non-food items as well—everything from

HIDDEN CORN

Ever look at the ingredient list on a food label and wonder about those strange names? All of these common ingredients and hundreds more are made from corn:

modified starch
 unmodified starch
 glucose syrup
 maltodextrin
 ascorbic acid
 crystalline fructose
 lactic acid
 MSG
 caramel color
 xanthan gum



All food begins with the process of photosynthesis.

back to photosynthesis in plants. It's more than a figure of speech to say that plants create life out of thin air.

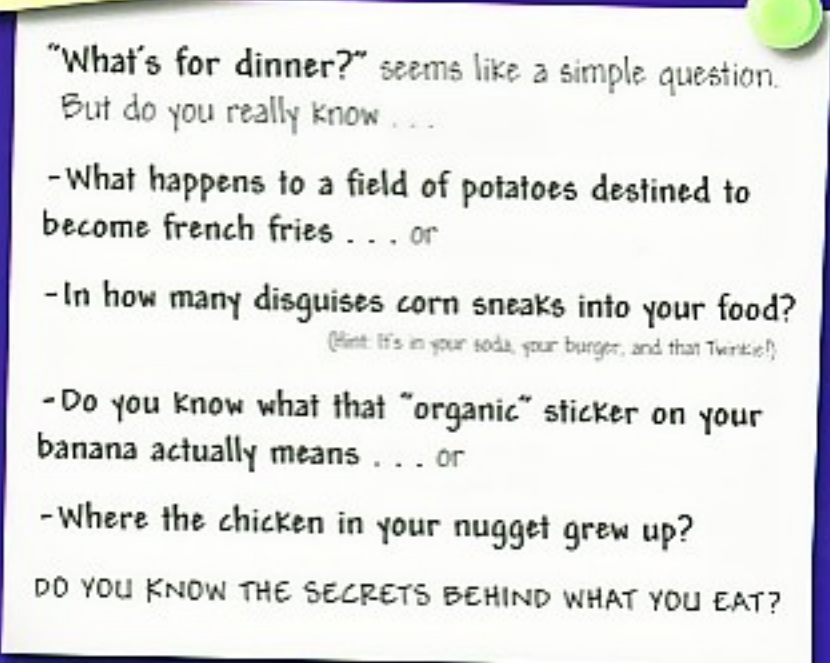
So the plants take carbon and make it into food. Then we eat the plants, or we eat animals that have eaten the plants. That's how the carbon winds up in our cells. But not all carbon is the same. Corn uses slightly different types of carbon than other plants. So by looking at the type of carbon in our cells, scientists can tell how much corn we have been eating.

Todd Dawson, a biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, has done exactly that kind of research. He says that when you look at the carbon in the average American's cells, "we look like corn chips with legs."

Americans don't think of themselves as corn eaters. Our bread is made from wheat flour. We don't eat a lot of corn on



IT'S TIME TO
BECOME A
FOOD DETECTIVE!



"What's for dinner?" seems like a simple question.
But do you really know . . .

- What happens to a field of potatoes destined to become french fries . . . or
- In how many disguises corn sneaks into your food?
(Hint: It's in your soda, your burger, and that Twinkie!)
- Do you know what that "organic" sticker on your banana actually means . . . or
- Where the chicken in your nugget grew up?

DO YOU KNOW THE SECRETS BEHIND WHAT YOU EAT?

IN THIS BOOK, you'll go undercover at the supermarket. You'll delve behind the scenes of your dinner, and by the time you've digested the last page you'll have put together the fascinating (and sometimes disturbing) puzzle of what's on your plate and how it got there.

This young readers edition of Michael Pollan's bestseller *The Omnivore's Dilemma* includes a brand-new introduction and afterword, an exclusive author Q&A, and a variety of fresh visual "evidence."