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# Swallow This: Serving Up The Food Industry's Darkest Secrets



## Synopsis

From the author of *What to Eat and Shopped*, a revelatory investigation into what really goes into the food we eat. Even with 25 years experience as a journalist and investigator of the food chain, Joanna Blythman still felt she had unanswered questions about the food we consume every day. How 'natural' is the process for making a 'natural' flavouring? What, exactly, is modified starch, and why is it an ingredient in so many foods? What is done to pitta bread to make it stay 'fresh' for six months? And why, when you eat a supermarket salad, does the taste linger in your mouth for several hours after? *Swallow* This is a fascinating exploration of the food processing industry and its products – not just the more obvious ready meals, chicken nuggets and tinned soups, but the less overtly industrial – washed salads, smoothies, yoghurts, cereal bars, bread, fruit juice, prepared vegetables. Forget illegal, horse-meat-scandal processes, every step in the production of these is legal, but practised by a strange and inaccessible industry, with methods a world-away from our idea of domestic food preparation, and obscured by technical speak, unintelligible ingredients manuals, and clever labelling practices. Determined to get to the bottom of the impact the industry has on our food, Joanna Blythman has gained unprecedented access to factories, suppliers and industry insiders, to give an utterly eye-opening account of what we're really swallowing.

## Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Fourth Estate (February 2, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0008157855

ISBN-13: 978-0008157852

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

With *Swallow* this, author Blythman presents a thoroughly researched and informative book on everything that goes into store bought or restaurant food (in other words, anything you didn't grow

yourself). With a distinct EU/UK perspective, nearly every chemical (whether listed on a food label or not) is exhaustively researched, cataloged, and collected into intelligent groupings for easy reference. For the most part, shock tactics and ExposÃ© histrionics are eschewed in favor of common sense observations, making for a more grounded piece. More interestingly, since Blythman is UK-based, this is a revealing book that shows the EU really isn't all that better than the US in controlling everything from GM to chemical additives that could be harmful or deadly through long term exposure. The book breaks down as follows: Part One: How the processed food system works (why it all tastes the same, on the factory floor, clean label, at the food maker's market, fresh in store); Part Two: The defining characteristics of processed food (sweet, oily, flavored, colored, watery, starchy, tricky, old, packed). About 30% of the text is the carefully compiled references at the end. Much of the book revolves around how preparation practices have changed to make food cheaper and last longer - often by replacing whole ingredients with chemical vestiges of the original or cheaper alternatives. Most revealing is not so much the chemicals themselves but the extraction methods that use very toxic chemicals (e.g., breaking milk down into 'milk proteins) to accomplish the purpose. Also interesting was the last decade mission of manufacturers to 'clean labels' in order to turn chemical sounding ingredients into more palatable 'natural' sounding names.

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