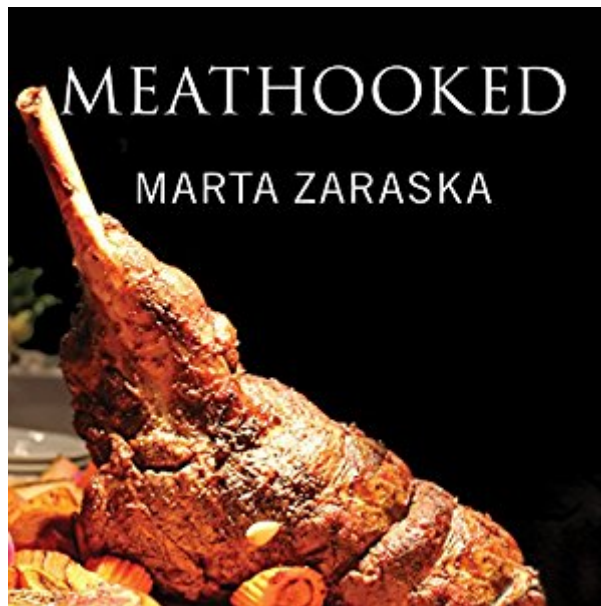


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Meathooked: The History And Science Of Our 2.5-Million-Year Obsession With Meat



Synopsis

One of the great science and health revelations of our time is the danger posed by meat-eating. Every day, it seems, we are warned about the harm producing and consuming meat can do to the environment and our bodies. Many of us have tried to limit how much meat we consume, and many of us have tried to give it up altogether. But it is not easy to resist the smoky, cured, barbecued, and fried delights that tempt us. What makes us crave animal protein, and what makes it so hard to give up? And if consuming meat is truly unhealthy for human beings, why didn't evolution turn us all into vegetarians in the first place? In *Meathooked*, science writer Marta Zaraska explores what she calls the "meat puzzle": our love of meat, despite its harmful effects. Zaraska takes us on a witty tour of meat cultures around the world, stopping in India's unusual steakhouses, animal sacrifices at temples in Benin, and labs in the Netherlands that grow meat in petri dishes. From the power of evolution to the influence of the meat lobby, and from our genetic makeup to the traditions of our foremothers, she reveals the interplay of forces that keep us hooked on animal protein.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Meathooked by journalist and science writer Marta Zaraska is subtitled "The History and Science of our 2.5 Million Year Obsession with Meat," which clearly indicates her focus in this book. She begins by saying that the book is not about the health hazards of eating meat or the mistreatment of animals raised for consumption, but rather about what drives people to eat meat, what she calls "hooks." Ms. Zaraska traces the history of meat consumption from its origins over two million

years ago when only bacteria and other microorganisms existed. The first primates began eating meat in large part because of climate change. As the supply of natural fruits, nuts and vegetables diminished they turned to animals for nourishment. A number of social advantages developed. For example, when a large animal was killed it was shared with the community and the hunters were admired for their bravery. After all, killing a sabre-tooth tiger requires more courage than pulling up a carrot! The idea that we need a lot of protein is a myth. The actual need is .8 grams per kg. of body weight per day, a figure that is easily obtained in developed countries. Other factors that incline humans to eat meat are the Maillard Reaction (the aroma of cooked meat); fat which makes meat more tasty and umami (a savory taste). In the U.S. the meat industry also has a strong lobby compared to proponents of fruits and vegetables. Meat is seen as making you strong. A "vegetable" is someone who is basically inert and a "couch potato" is a lazy person. The U.S. government also subsidizes the production of meat. Commercials for meat products never show live animals because the industry does not want people to realize that meat comes from living things. A lot of eating is culturally driven.

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