

# 10 must-read books about food, ingredients and nutrition



16-12-21 / 5 min read

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Little is more pleasurable and relaxing than reading a good book. Maybe you love food, are interested in health and nutrition, want to discover the history of gastronomy and how countries and civilisations developed their cuisine? Or you could be curious about the chemistry and functionality of ingredients and the science behind food, want to know how we can preserve and improve the food system, or simply want to settle in with a delightful culinary memoir? If you have any of those characteristics, then these books are the perfect reads for you on a cosy night in.

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## **Food: A history of taste various authors, edited by Paul Freedman**

Yale History Professor Paul Freedman takes us on a food history journey with this delectable book that looks at taste through civilisations. Packed with beautiful illustrations, each chapter is written by a different author. If you've ever wondered about the flavours of Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, or want to know about the birth of Medieval Islamic cuisine, this book is for you.

[Buy it here](#)

## **Eating to Extinction The World's Rarest Foods and Why We Need to Save Them by Dan Saladino**

BBC food journalist Dan Saladino travels the globe to look at food at risk of extinction, looks at agricultural practices and sustainability methods – and lack thereof. He discovers crops that we no longer consume (as well as those we over consume) and shares stories from all corners of the world and the people trying to keep local food traditions alive in spite of monoculture and modernisation. A captivating, if often very sobering, book, that will make you think twice about what's on your plate.

[Buy it here](#)

## **At Christmas We Feast: Festive Food Through the Ages by Dr Annie Gray**

With her infectious passion for food history, Dr Annie Gray takes the reader on a journey of Christmas traditions through the ages, with stories, recipes and excerpts from old cookbooks. A gorgeous festive read full of humour and interesting facts.

[Buy it here](#)

## **Salt, Sugar, Fat How the Food Giants Hooked Us by Michael Moss**

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more. He also looks at junk and cheap food and the effects it has, not just on the body and mind, but on society too.

[Buy it here](#)

## The Mind-Gut Connection: How the Hidden Conversation Within Our Bodies Impacts Our Mood, Our Choices, and Our Overall Health by Emeran Mayer, MD

Scientists are only starting to connect the dots between the mind and the gut. Emeran Mayer, MD, has studied the link between brain and body for forty years and in this fascinating and eye-opening book he not only explains the connection and the science behind it in a comprehensible manner, he also aims to improve the reader's physical and mental health with simple, easy to apply advice.

[Buy it here](#)

## Food: A Culinary History by Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari

This book is for serious food lovers, epicureans, those working in the industry, history buffs and the curious. With chapters on prehistory and early civilisations, food traditions and dietary rules of different countries and ethnic groups, medicine, food and social hierarchy, production and food systems and modernisation, this comprehensive tome is a must-read for those truly passionate about food.

[Buy it here](#)

## Why we eat (too much): The new science of appetite by Dr Andrew Jenkinson

Packed with data, research and case studies, University College Hospital surgeon Dr Andrew Jenkinson's book explores nutrition, investigates why people gain weight, how dieting affects our bodies and why it often doesn't work long term, and debunks some myths about weight loss. The new edition also includes a chapter about the link between [obesity](#) and COVID-19. A fascinating read.

[Buy it here](#)

This beautiful and nostalgic memoir by Italian-American actor Stanley Tucci is truly unputdownable. Full of stories, memories and recipes, it's impossible not to love Tucci's writing style and not find his utter adoration of food infectious.

Peppered with anecdotes about his famous friends, such as Meryl Streep, in this book Tucci includes some of his favourite recipes, including *Timpano*, the Italian baked dish featured in the actor's 1996 film **Big Night**, and the classic drink Negroni – which you might want to make and sip whilst reading this fabulous memoir.

[Buy it here](#)

## Ingredients: The Strange Chemistry of Plants, Poisons and Processed Foods by George Zaidan

Chemistry has never been so accessible – or interesting – as in George Zaidan's book. Zaidan looks at ingredients and chemicals, what they are, how they are created and how they affect us. He answers questions about nutrition and the human body, backing it with science, with wit and humour. A brilliant book even for the chemistry-challenged.

[Buy it here](#)

## Eating Plant Based: Scientific Answers to Your Nutrition Questions by Dr Zahra Kassam and Dr Shireen Kassam

Written by sisters Dr Zahra Kassam and **Dr Shireen Kassam**, both oncologists, this book is backed with a huge amount of scientific research, and clearly explains the science behind a **plant-based diet**, answering questions about B12 vitamin, calcium and bone health, whether red meat causes cancer and the health benefits of vegetables, grains, seeds and nuts. Compelling, easy to understand and a fantastic read for anybody looking to improve their health, trying to go vegan, or simply curious about the benefits of eating plant-based.

[Buy it here](#)

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