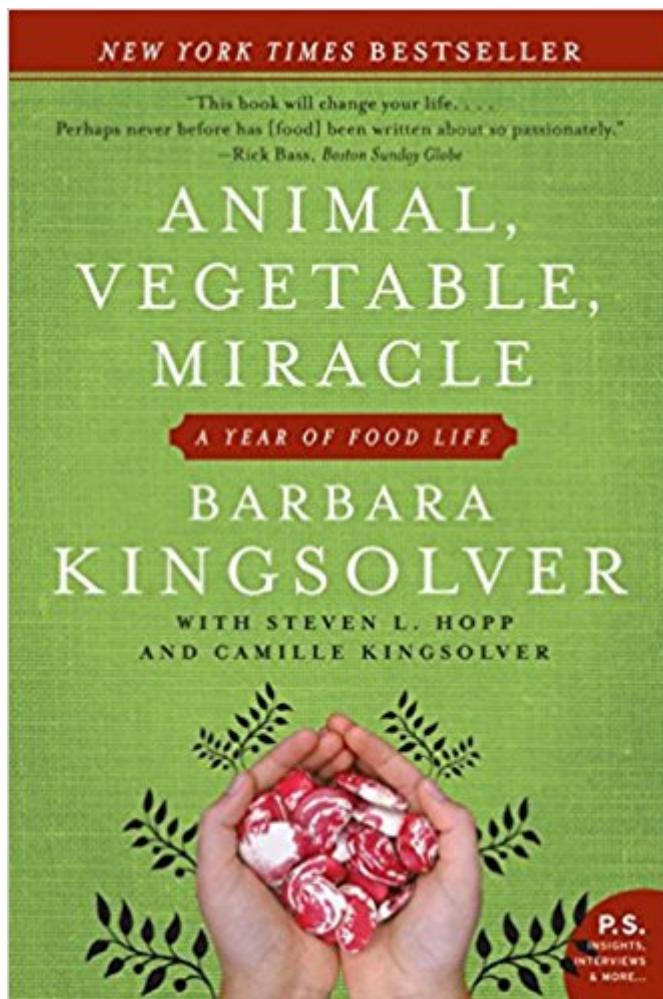


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Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year Of Food Life



Synopsis

Author Barbara Kingsolver and her family abandoned the industrial-food pipeline to live a rural life—vowing that, for one year, they'd only buy food raised in their own neighborhood, grow it themselves, or learn to live without it. Part memoir, part journalistic investigation, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* is an enthralling narrative that will open your eyes in a hundred new ways to an old truth: You are what you eat.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. [Signature]Reviewed by Nina PlanckMichael Pollan is the crack investigator and graceful narrator of the ecology of local food and the toxic logic of industrial agriculture. Now he has a peer. Novelist Kingsolver recounts a year spent eating home-grown food and, if not that, local. Accomplished gardeners, the Kingsolver clan grow a large garden in southern Appalachia and spend summers "putting food by," as the classic kitchen title goes. They make pickles, chutney and mozzarella; they jar tomatoes, braid garlic and stuff turkey sausage. Nine-year-old Lily runs a heritage poultry business, selling eggs and meat. What they don't raise (lamb, beef, apples) comes from local farms. Come winter, they feast on root crops and canned goods, menus slouching toward asparagus. Along the way, the Kingsolver family, having given up industrial meat years before, abandons its vegetarian ways and discovers the pleasures of conscientious carnivory. This field—local food and sustainable agriculture—is crowded with books in increasingly predictable flavors: the earnest manual, diary of an epicure, the environmental battle cry, the

accidental gardener. Animal, Vegetable, Miracle is all of these, and much smarter. Kingsolver takes the genre to a new literary level; a well-paced narrative and the apparent ease of the beautiful prose makes the pages fly. Her tale is both classy and disarming, substantive and entertaining, earnest and funny. Kingsolver is a moralist ("the conspicuous consumption of limited resources has yet to be accepted widely as a spiritual error, or even bad manners"), but more often wry than pious. Another hazard of the genre is snobbery. You won't find it here. Seldom do paeans to heirloom tomatoes (which I grew up selling at farmers' markets) include equal respect for outstanding modern hybrids like Early Girl. Kingsolver has the ear of a journalist and the accuracy of a naturalist. She makes short, neat work of complex topics: what's risky about the vegan diet, why animals belong on ecologically sound farms, why bitterness in lettuce is good. Kingsolver's clue to help greenhorns remember what's in season is the best I've seen. You trace the harvest by botanical development, from buds to fruits to roots. Kingsolver is not the first to note our national "eating disorder" and the injuries industrial agriculture wreaks, yet this practical vision of how we might eat instead is as fresh as just-picked sweet corn. The narrative is peppered with useful sidebars on industrial agriculture and ecology (by husband Steven Hopp) and recipes (by daughter Camille), as if to show that local food—*in the growing, buying, cooking, eating and the telling*—demands teamwork. (May)Nina Planck is the author of *Real Food: What to Eat and Why* (Bloomsbury USA, 2006).

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Adult/High School—*This book chronicles the year that Barbara Kingsolver, along with her husband and two daughters, made a commitment to become locavores—those who eat only locally grown foods. This first entailed a move away from their home in non-food-producing Tucson to a family farm in Virginia, where they got right down to the business of growing and raising their own food and supporting local farmers. For teens who grew up on supermarket offerings, the notion not only of growing one's own produce but also of harvesting one's own poultry was as foreign as the concept that different foods relate to different seasons. While the volume begins as an environmental treatise—the oil consumption related to transporting foodstuffs around the world is enormous—it ends, as the year ends, in a celebration of the food that physically nourishes even as the recipes and the memories of cooks and gardeners past nourish our hearts and souls. Although the book maintains that eating well is not a class issue, discussions of heirloom breeds and making cheese at home may strike some as high-flown; however, those looking for healthful alternatives to processed foods will find inspiration to seek out farmers' markets and to*

learn to cook and enjoy seasonal foods. Give this title to budding Martha Stewarts, green-leaning fans of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (Rodale, 2006), and kids outraged by Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* (Houghton, 2001).¹ Jenny Gasset, Orange County Public Library, CA
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All I can say is excellent, excellent, excellent! As a nation, it's sad we'd left our food choices to big industry who have little interest in bringing us good food and more interest in stuffing their own fat pockets. I have nothing but praise for people who respect the land to produce a sustainable product for healthy consumption. Cheers to the Kingsolver's! Also recommended is Gary Nabhan 'Coming Home to Eat' - where he chose the difficult feat of eating locally in Arizona. For a fictional variety Ruth Ozeki's 'All Over Creation' and 'My year of Meats'. The latter may make you re-think about industry meat ever again.

Love, love, love this book! I originally read it several years ago, when retirement was just a dream and this book inspired me to aim at taking a similar leap in lifestyle. Since retiring, it's taken about three years, but my husband and I have gotten very close to living off our property and eating locally (whenever practical). Now that my Bookclub friends have chosen *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* as this month's read, it's been such fun to reread this book to see just how close we've come to living the life Barbara Kingsolver writes about so eloquently. I've enjoyed reading this book a second time every bit as much as the first!

I really liked this book. When I finished reading it- I wanted to move to the country and start growing my own food and raising my own livestock. I think Barbara Kingsolver does an excellent job of giving reasonable tips for those of us that can't buy a farm. I loved all of the recipes included. I also had the audio version of this book which I really loved. It is Barbara Kingsolver and her family that narrate the book and I think that added so much. This book has definitely changed the way that I look at, think about and buy food. I feel like I have a much better understanding of why local food is so much better. Kingsolver does a great job of educating without being preachy. She is passionate about her beliefs in food but knows that it is not realistic for most of us. I think this is a must read for anyone who cares at all about the food they eat or the planet we all share.

As a vegetarian whose trying desperately to eat healthier I found this book pretty fascinating (it's

also the first one I've ever read by Kingsolver). While I did have a few issues with it, I found it a pretty solid read. **Positives** = Organic, Pesticide Free, Grown in Backyard- The idea of trying to eating locally and doing so much of it yourself is impressive, no questions asked.- I appreciated how Kingsolver brought her family both into the project at home, and into the writing of the book. It was a nice gesture and her daughter and husband offered different perspectives.- Kingsolver's writing made me want to read her works of fiction- there's a fluidity of language and an ability to describe that I definitely can appreciate- I learned a lot about growing your own food, eating locally and the politics behind agriculture. Learning is good. **Negatives** = Hamburgers from McDonalds, GMOs, and Twinkies- I try so hard to eat my fruits and veggies, but after reading this I felt a little discouraged. It's not enough to eat them! You had to buy them from the right places! Or grow them yourself! You have to make sure they're organic! You have to have the farmer who grew them sign in blood that they're not genetically modified (not really)!- There are parts that get a little boring, to be honest. Kingsolver gets a little romantic in terms of her farm or a little wordy when up on her soapbox. All in all a great read; for those that are conscientious of their diets a must.

Barbara Kingsolver is one of my favorite fiction writers. I heard about this book when it first came out, but at the time was not interested in it. Fast forward a few years and I have gotten much more interested in eating healthy, organic, etc.. I was reading an interview with another favorite author, Michael Pollan, and he mentioned how influential this book was on people deciding to purchase locally sourced food. This made me interested in the book and I downloaded it to my Kindle and couldn't stop reading it. Barbara Kingsolver's descriptions of her farm, the food, her neighbors, etc.. is poetic. I found the perspectives written by her husband and daughter informative, but not as enjoyable to read. How can they compete with one of the best (in my opinion) contemporary fiction writers? The book inspired me to change my food purchasing behaviors, not by knocking me over the head with guilt, but by the beautiful descriptions of the joys of local eating. For anyone interested in food and nutrition, this book is a must read. It is pure joy and I was sad when it ended.

I'm an avid Kingsolver reader and when I saw this new title I picked it up out of habit. Surprisingly, this book has changed the way I eat and the way I think about eating. I can't keep a catus alive, but I can find local farms and neighborhood markets, thanks to the links she provides. This book is a life-changer for me and my family.

My sister-in-law and brother bought a small farm in NC. My sister-in-law has always believed in

sustainable farming and life. She along with support from a few family members and the farm manager have set up four tunnels over the last three years, sells at five of the local markets and to local eateries. I admired this endeavor from afar until I recently moved to the farm this past fall. The devotion and passion to thisif you will....lifestyle is truly inspiring and eye opening. Everyday ,weather, animals and local events test this devotion, passion and way of life.SO....reading Animal, Vegetable, Miracle gave me additional insight in ways I could offer support to her and the farm. I am also finding my way back to the basics of growing and cooking the wonderful harvest earth has to offer. Now I still have a few processed foods I have not given up...but so much better than the last ten years!Barbara Kingsolver is one of my favorite writers. I am sorry I didn't read this one sooner.....but I am forever grateful that I have now.

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