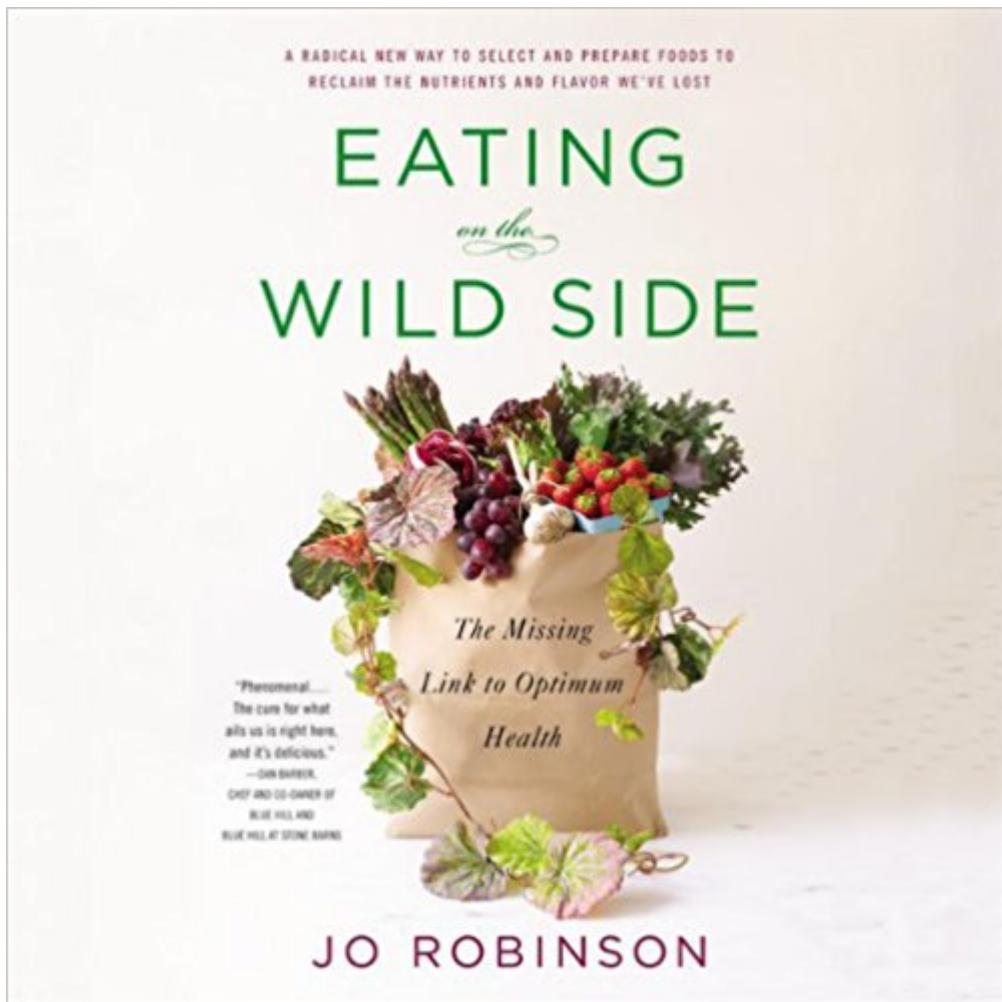


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Eating On The Wild Side: The Missing Link To Optimum Health



Synopsis

Ever since farmers first planted seeds 100,000 years ago, humans have been destroying the nutritional value of their fruits and vegetables. Unwittingly, we've been selecting plants that are high in starch and sugar and low in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants for over 400 generations. Eating on the Wild Side reveals the solution: choosing modern varieties that approach the nutritional content of wild plants but also please the modern palate. Jo Robinson explains that many of these newly identified varieties can be found in supermarkets and farmers markets, and introduces simple, scientifically proven methods of preparation that enhance their flavor and nutrition. Based on years of scientific research and filled with food history and practical advice, Eating on the Wild Side will forever change the way we think about food.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I almost didn't buy this book, not being sure if it was a history book or a cookbook or a diet book or what. But since I've appreciated author Jo Robinson's "Eat Wild" website I decided to go ahead. I'm so glad I did. If you too are wondering what this book is, then I'll tell you what I've found. This is a book about the vegetables and fruits that are available in supermarkets and farmer's markets in the U.S. For each group of vegetables or fruits, there is a history going back to the earliest cultivation and information on the wild origins. Included with this history is also the healthful properties of the wild plant and the changes that have taken place as a result of cultivation. Wild plants are the original nutritional powerhouses and the author tells you how you can get closest to that with the cultivated plants found in the stores, markets or backyard gardens. There is one review on that

complains about the use of ORAC values throughout this book. The reviewer notes that the USDA has removed its ORAC database, but doesn't explain why ORAC was pulled. The USDA in announcing the removal says that "ORAC values are routinely misused by food and dietary supplement manufacturing companies to promote their products and by consumers to guide their food and dietary supplement choices." Marketers were abusing the system and had found ways to juggle the results to get high ORAC values, such as comparing the score of a gallon 'juice mix' with a half cup of berries. The marketers deliberately obscured the misleading result. But ORAC values can be important. As ORAC researcher Ronald L. Prior, Ph.D.

This book is, in my opinion, LOOOONG overdue. From sweet corn that no longer tastes "corny" to cottony white strawberries and golf-ball tomatoes, what has happened to our produce and what can we do to obtain the best, most nutritious fruits and vegetables. This is a practical book as well as a very interesting read. It's not only a natural history of our most commonly-eaten fruits and veg, it's also a guide to buying and using produce, sources for seeds, and much more. There is a new lack of diversity in varietals. The author gives the example of apples. We used to live for the apple SEASONS...not season. First early Macs, then Courtlands, Jonathans, Winesaps, etc. Now, go to the store and it's Gala, Fuji, Braeburn and the inevitable Granny Smiths for the most part. And those Grannys to me don't taste right. They are bitter. Many fruits just don't taste the same to me anymore (grapes, strawberries in particular. Corn is weird--sugary sweet, no character. Personally, I miss the yellow corn of my childhood, grown right down the street and picked and rushed to the table.) The history of the blueberry was particularly interesting; the darkest berries (full of antioxidants) were selected AGAINST when they were cultivated from wild ones, because the horticulturalist thought lighter berries would sell better. The saddest thing is the loss of nutrients. These foods are vital to your health. The author goes over how we got various fruits, such as the apricots of Asia, the apples loved by the Salish tribe of America but also gives us suggestion on where and what to buy.

I liked this book and thought the assembly of facts and stories about the common fruits and vegetables we eat to be both informative and at times entertaining. I think the book also does a good job of cataloging some of the effects of industrial food production. Overall, the book was novel enough, interesting enough and surprising enough for me to give it 4 stars, but a few critical flaws make it impossible to use the book for its stated mission as a guide on which fruit / vegetables to eat, and a flaw in methodology (use of the discredited ORAC score) throughout forces me to downgrade to 3 stars. Below are a few questions that I thought the book could have better

addressed.1) Is sheer quantity of phytonutrients really the only thing that determines whether a particular fruit / vegetable is good for you? Wouldn't some phytonutrients or combinations of phytonutrients be better than others? There is limited discussion of this throughout the book. I am not sure this is the author's fault as I am not sure whether the scientific research is there yet, but a frank discussion of the state of understanding here to set the stage would have been helpful. The ORAC score the author used to compare varities throughout the book has been discredited according to the Wikipedia page. The USDA has stopped publishing ORAC data it seems after the connection between quantity of antioxidants and human health was seriously questioned. Some mention of the controversy around ORAC would have been intellectually honest given its extensive use throughout the book.2) How do the various fruits / vegetables compare among themselves. Given a 2000 calorie / day budget, how should a person allocate this? Etc. The book has a couple comparisons (eat more berries, etc.

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