

Food: A Very Short Introduction

By John Krebs

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- Whose responsibility is it to tackle the problem of obesity – individuals? Governments? The food industry? Schools and parents?
- Do you think genetically modified foods are a good or a bad idea? Why?
- Is organic food better for you? Is it better for the environment?
- What would you think constitutes a healthy diet?
- Would it be better for the environment if we were all vegetarians?
- How much should you worry about pesticide residues on your food?
- Why do people differ so much in the kinds of food they like and dislike?
- If you were advising your government on the future of agriculture in your country, what would be your top three priorities?
- How important is our upbringing in determining our food preferences?
- Whose job is it to ensure food is safe? How safe is safe enough?
- What can evolution tell us about the food habits of humans?
- Is it easier to lose weight by dieting or exercising?
- Do you think that eating certain foods can help prevent you getting cancer or suffering from heart disease? How do you know?
- What do you think is the most important innovation in the history of human food?
- What is your favourite dish? Can you explain why in terms of its flavor, appearance and texture?

Further Reading

David A Kessler, *The end of overeating* (Penguin, 2009) A former head of the US Food and Drug Administration's view of the obesity crisis and the food industry.

Calestous Juma, *The New Harvest: Agricultural innovation in Africa* (Oxford University Press, 2011) A distinguished Kenyan born academic gives an upbeat view of how Africa can increase its food production by harnessing modern technology.

Marion Nestle, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* (California Studies in Food & Culture: 2007) An interesting polemic on the role of the food industry.

Jeffrey Steingarten, *The man who ate everything* (Alfred A Knopf Inc.: 1997) and *It must've been something I ate* (Alfred A Knopf Inc.: 2002) A witty and informed food writer's collected essays, some of which are very memorable.