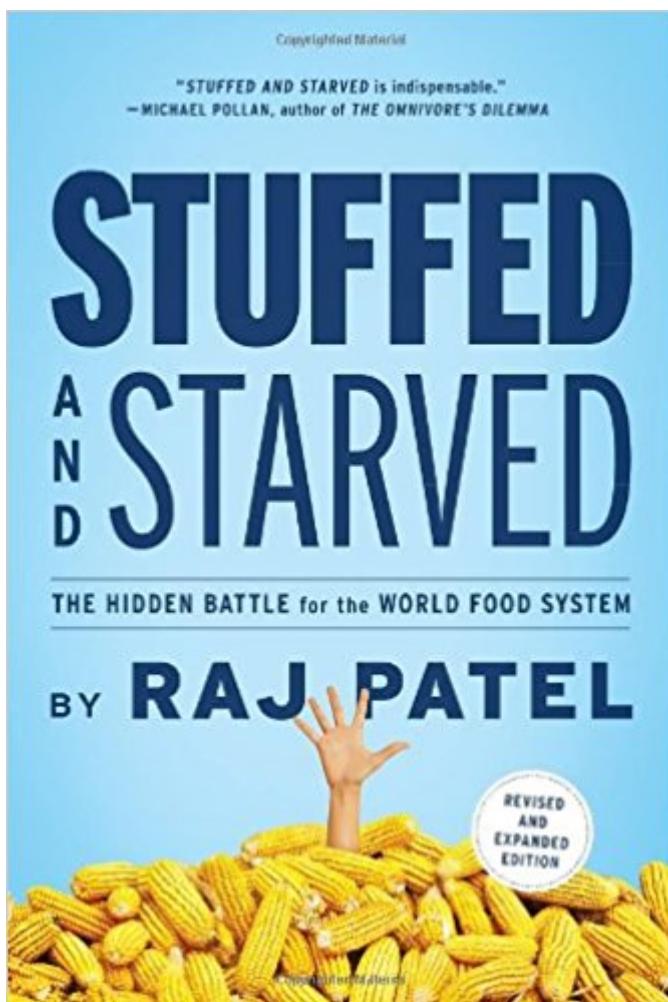


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Stuffed And Starved: The Hidden Battle For The World Food System - Revised And Updated



Synopsis

Revised and Expanded Edition "For anyone attempting to make sense of the world food crisis, or understand the links between U.S. farm policy and the ability of the world's poor to feed themselves, *Stuffed and Starved* is indispensable." —Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* "a perverse fact of modern life: There are more starving people in the world than ever before, while there are also more people who are overweight. To find out how we got to this point and what we can do about it, Raj Patel launched a comprehensive investigation into the global food network. It took him from the colossal supermarkets of California to India's wrecked paddy-fields and Africa's bankrupt coffee farms, while along the way he ate genetically engineered soy beans and dodged flying objects in the protestor-packed streets of South Korea. What he found was shocking, from the false choices given us by supermarkets to a global epidemic of farmer suicides, and real reasons for famine in Asia and Africa. Yet he also found great cause for hope—in international resistance movements working to create a more democratic, sustainable and joyful food system. Going beyond ethical consumerism, Patel explains, from seed to store to plate, the steps to regain control of the global food economy, stop the exploitation of both farmers and consumers, and rebalance global sustenance.

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Customer Reviews

"Compelling. At first glance, Raj is another depressing voice in the chorus. But in traveling the world

researching the book, he also found hope in international social movements working to create more democratic, sustainable, and joyful food systems." •Mark Bittman, New York Times "For anyone attempting to make sense of the world food crisis, or understand the links between U.S. farm policy and the ability of the world's poor to feed themselves, *Stuffed and Starved* is indispensable." •Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* "One of the most dazzling books I have read in a very long time. The product of a brilliant mind and a gift to a world hungering for justice." •Naomi Klein, author of *No Logo* "Patel's broad treatment helps the layman connect the dots, as well as hear the voices of those who occupy the lower rungs of the global food chain." •Time Magazine "A blistering indictment of the policies of multinational agribusiness conglomerates and charges that their drive for profit at any cost has left the developing world starving while wealthy countries like the United States are experiencing epidemic obesity rates and related health problems." •Newsweek "For Patel, it is a short step from Western consumers 'engorged and intoxicated' with cheap processed food to Mexican and Indian farmers committing suicide because they can't make a living. The 'food industry's pabulum' makes us all cogs in an evil machine." •The New Yorker "A book full of insight, that makes an important contribution to understanding that the politics of food is not a narrow matter of shopping, ethical or otherwise." •The Guardian "*Stuffed and Starved* remains a brilliant didactic account of the powerful interests (dis)organizing our food systems, and why, when food is an object of profit, there are no modern solutions to modern problems such as endemic hunger, ill-health and environmental degradation...Raj Patel's unique sensibility and intelligence in evaluating grassroots alternatives provide a road map to understanding and changing the world through re-centering food as a cultural anchor rather than a product, especially at this moment of environmental uncertainty." •Philip David McMichael, author of *Development and Social Change* "With its conversational tone, sense of humor, and real-life vignettes from the author's travels around the world, the book is accessible to general readers and will be as classroom-friendly as Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma*." •Reference and Research Book News

Raj Patel, a fellow at Food First, is a visiting scholar at the UC Berkeley Center for African Studies. He has worked for the World Bank, WTO, and the UN, and he's also been tear-gassed on four continents protesting them. He is the author of *The Value of Nothing: How to Reshape Market Society and Redefine Democracy*.

I am currently a senior chemical engineer taking a food science class. I have learned about food distribution and accessibility issues through trips to Nicaragua and an urban development class. Both of these looked at the economic issues people in these groups faces but never the emotional and mental toll hunger has. I am thankful that this book opened up my eyes to the emotional trauma farmers go through due to the globalization of crops. Throughout reading the book, I realized that a lot of the things that Patel was talking about were things I think most people already know but choose to actively ignore when purchasing food, know but are not aware that they know, or logical conclusions that one can make when really thinking about the process of how our food gets to us. I think the book could have focused a little more on supermarkets impact on economies in "the Global South." It was mentioned briefly through the mention of the farmers getting angry at ShopRite for taking all of their customers but I definitely think this is something that could be further discussed and studied. It is an issue that it's furthering the malnutrition of farmers and their families - something that is one of the main topics of this book. This book focused a lot on farmers, the globalization of crops, and how farmers are impoverished and malnourished. However, the opposite end of the food spectrum, those who are obese, seemed to be severely lacking in detail. To me, it is important to note that not everyone who is obese is that way because they are glutinous. This was a point that was brought up but I feel that not enough emphasis was put on it. If the malnutrition of farmers is going to be such a big point, the malnutrition of the poor in urban communities should be an important point as well. The obesity problem of poor urban people seemed to be glossed over as an issue that had to do more with their lack of space to grow food and ease of public transportation instead of food accessibility. I don't think I am able to believe that space and transportation affect weight more than the ability to get healthy food. Most poor urban communities are food deserts. Instead of supermarkets, families need to shop at corner stores because that's what is closest to them. These stores are more expensive than supermarkets and filled with sugary drinks and foods high in sodium and fat. However, due to economic issues, long work days, and the time it takes to use public transportation, families do not have much of a choice but to buy from these stores. I'm glad the author cares so much about farmers and the struggles they have but there are some parts of this book that could have been taken out to allow more time to be focused on the poor in urban areas. Overall, I enjoyed the book. It brought to light a lot of issues that I was unaware of, such as farmer suicide and government using food as a bargaining chip. However, there are a lot of aspects in the food market that I think could have been talked about or were talked about but could have had a lot more detail. This book would be beneficial for an introduction to the topic but other books would be needed to have more information about some of the issues that were briefly touched on in

the book or issues that exist but were not really talked about at all.

This is an excellent book, logical, full of information and clearly written. For years, I have had serious doubts and alternative thoughts about our modern society, and wondered how it is that most people seem to see it quite differently than I do. It was such a pleasure to read this book and have my thoughts expressed so well, and those doubts and questions answered. I never thought I could read a book about economics and not go to sleep or give up in disgust, but I practically swallowed this one in one gulp and wished for more. My only criticism of the book is that there are a few typos and bungled sentences.

You probably have no accurate idea about how your food is produced and by whom -- around the world. Michael Pollen changed how we think about food itself in his *Omnivore's Dilemma*. Joel Salatin and many others have shown how it should be grown. Now, Patel lays out the economics of the food industry under which both the people who physically do the farming and those who buy food suffer, while all is controlled by a very few corporations that reap the big profits and government agencies that help them do it. Patel argues for a return to the beauty of locally and/or personally grown food (animal and vegetable), it's loving preparation in the kitchen, and it's return to being a means of gathering family and community together. We need to slow down a bit. When you learn the true costs of the food you are eating I hope you might rethink some of your choices. *Stuffed and Starved* is not long -- and well worth your time to read it.

"*Stuffed and Starved*" by Raj Patel is an ambitious piece of research and critical analysis of the world food system. As both a seasoned policy analyst and news reporter, Mr. Patel's thinking has been enriched through interactions with farmers, businesspeople, policymakers, and activists in four continents. Sharing his thoughts and experiences in an intelligent, mature and accessible manner, Mr. Patel contends that the corporate dominance of the global food production and distribution system must be challenged at the pain of pushing humanity into an ever more insecure and unsustainable future. Mr. Patel's core argument is that a relatively small number of giant corporations have used their power to benefit themselves at great cost to people's health and the environment. To help build his case, Mr. Patel traveled to Brazil, India and the U.S. to find small farmers who are all but forced to produce food under exploitative terms set by the agribusiness giants. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that farmers who are pressed to merely survive are becoming less and less concerned about conserving land and water resources, much less with

preserving the unique varieties of crops that might otherwise enrich our collective experience with food. Instead, farmers tend to produce commodity goods such as soy beans that are often shipped to distant consumers located thousands of miles away; the author follows the flow of product through the supply chain to document and contrast how individual farmers receive next to nothing from their labors while heavily-capitalized distributors, processors and retailers gain enormous profits. Meanwhile, consumers in developed countries gain access to an abundance of cheap but nutritiously-dubious food while many in poorer countries live calorie-deficient lives. Throughout the text, Mr. Patel provides valuable perspective and context. Mr. Patel views the Green Revolution of the 1960s as an attempt to help India and other recipient countries to resist communism and only secondarily as a project to support the local inhabitants. In fact, Mr. Patel discusses how the inroads made by multinational firms into the Indian farming economy has allowed these companies to successfully market patented pesticides, seeds and farm implements while simultaneously attempting to secure intellectual property rights to indigenous knowledge. Mr. Patel goes on to explain that the rubric of improving the lives of the poor has more recently been used by the biotech industry to market products such as 'golden rice', a food that offers a non-solution to the underlying conditions that drive poverty and malnutrition. Interestingly, Mr. Patel shows how the military's development of packaged foods production and distribution laid the groundwork for the industrial system we take for granted today. Mr. Patel deconstructs the modern supermarket to demonstrate that the illusion of choice serves to alienate and distract us from our relative powerlessness, pointing out that the corporate food system's heavy dependence on oil exposes society to disaster in the event of supply disruption. Fortunately, the author also discusses how people are beginning to challenge the corporate model, including farmer co-ops, the slow food movement, organic foods, and other strategies. The author is hopeful that reclaiming our food rights can become the basis for a more humane and equitable relationship between people and help to heal the planet that sustains us all. I highly recommend this outstanding book to everyone.

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