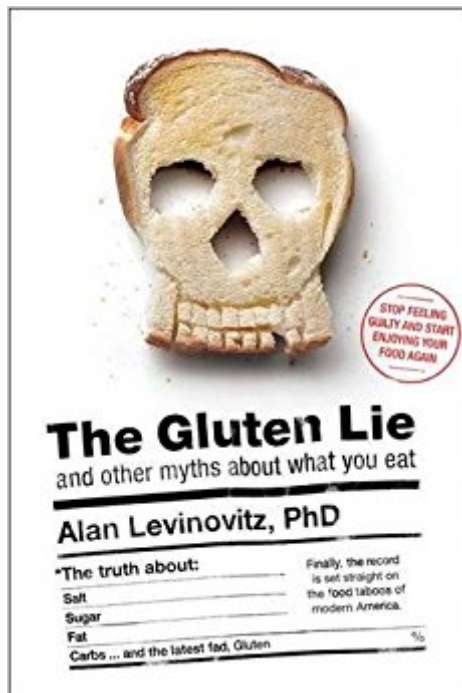




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# The Gluten Lie: And Other Myths About What You Eat



## Synopsis

An incendiary work of science journalism debunking the myths that dominate the American diet and showing readers how to stop feeling guilty and start loving their food again—sure to ignite controversy over our obsession with what it means to eat right. **FREE YOURSELF FROM ANXIETY ABOUT WHAT YOU EAT** Gluten. Salt. Sugar. Fat. These are the villains of the American diet—or so a host of doctors and nutritionists would have you believe. But the science is far from settled and we are racing to eliminate wheat and corn syrup from our diets because we’ve been lied to. The truth is that almost all of us can put the buns back on our burgers and be just fine. Remember when butter was the enemy? Now it’s good for you. You may have lived through times when the Atkins Diet was good, then bad, then good again; you may have wondered why all your friends cut down on salt or went Paleo; and you might even be thinking about cutting out wheat products from your own diet. For readers suffering from dietary whiplash, *The Gluten Lie* is the answer. Scientists and physicians know shockingly little about proper nutrition that they didn’t know a thousand years ago, even though Americans spend billions of dollars and countless hours obsessing over “eating right.” In this groundbreaking work, Alan Levinovitz takes on bestselling physicians and dietitians, exposing the myths behind how we come to believe which foods are good and which are bad—and pointing the way to a truly healthful life, free from anxiety about what we eat.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A factually accurate and highly entertaining work. It provides an effective counter to the fearmongering and false promises purveyed by sensationalists masquerading as scientists. This book should be essential reading for anyone who contemplates following a restrictive diet and for all health practitioners who use diets as the central platform of their therapeutic approach.”  
 (Peter Gibson, MD, Director of Gastroenterology at the Alfred Hospital and Monash University)  
 “In the world of food fears, this is a landmark book. Levinovitz brings science back into the picture in an eye-opening, punchy, and entertaining way that will change many of the single-sided conversations about food. The *Gluten Lie* will put a lot of minds at ease, and bring a lot of balance back into diets.”  
 (Brian Wansink, PhD, author of *Slim by Design* and *Mindless Eating*)  
 “Levinovitz shows us how to stop being afraid of food. Everyone truly interested in nutrition should read this book and get back to the joy of eating.”  
 (Philip Zeitler, MD, PhD, Professor of Pediatrics, University of Colorado School of Medicine)  
 “The cure for Dr. Oz-itis and Oprah syndrome. Well researched, easy to read, and incredibly informative.”  
 (Jen Gunter, MD, author of *The Preemie Primer*)  
 “Stop poisoning your friends and family with junk science nutritional claims. Feed them *The Gluten Lie* instead and enjoy lunch again.”  
 (Hank Campbell, founder of Science 2.0 and co-author of *Science Left Behind*)  
 “With a thorough and incisive investigation into what science really tells us about gluten, fat, sugar, and detox, Levinovitz argues persuasively that we can stop worrying about what we should eat and concentrate on enjoying food that appeals to our palate. Well-written, entertaining, solidly referenced, and perhaps the best debunking of popular diet myths ever.”  
 (Harriet Hall, MD, Associate Editor, *Science Based Medicine*)  
 “A fun and evidence-based inoculation of clarity into an area permeated with confusion and controversy. It is a must-read for anyone fed up with all the noise surrounding nutritional advice.”  
 (Tim Caulfield, Research Director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta, and author of *The Cure for Everything*)  
 “A fascinating read. Professor Levinovitz uses the saga of gluten sensitivity as one of several compelling object lessons.”  
 (Nortin M. Hadler, MD, Emeritus Professor of Medicine & Microbiology/Immunology UNC, Chapel Hill and author of *The Last Well Person and Worried Sick*)

Alan Levinovitz is an assistant professor at James Madison University. His writing has appeared in *Slate*, *Salon*, *Wired*, *The Believer*, and *The Millions*, as well as academic journals. He lives in Charlottesville, Virginia with his wife, his daughter, and a cat. Fake cheese is his one food taboo.

As a life long "health nut" I read this book with some caution. I have devoured books on health since I was 10 years old and got Gaylor Hauser's latest book for my birthday. He was the nutrition guru to the stars in about 1951 and I have followed his yogurt and wheat germ for breakfast recommendation ever since then. However, in the 1970's I was an assistant DA in San Francisco, and handled a big Laetrile case that lasted 10 years. I even wound up testifying in Washington DC about the subject. And through that I learned that belief in a "cure" • the placebo effect is very, very powerful. I also learned, among other things, that a "new cure" • taken two weeks after a valid treatment (such as chemotherapy) can be wrongfully thought to have caused a recovery which was actually due to the chemotherapy. "Cause" is not always clear cut. Over the years I have probably read well over 300 books on health, and I subscribe to at least 10 doctors' health newsletters and several health magazines. I have taken scores of vitamins every day my entire life. Thus, I approached this book with extreme caution. However, I loved it and plan to reread it. The author is clearly brilliant, and is a master of critical thinking. He points out the deception caused when certain "studies" or even just aspects of studies, are relied upon by someone claiming health benefits or detriments for a food product, and other studies are omitted. He points out, repeatedly, the tricks played upon us to deceive us into thinking that an approach to health has been proven, when it has not been. Dr Levinovitz stresses the power of myth, or as I think of it, the placebo effect • belief. He notes the complexity of the human body and the difficulty of establishing cause and effect when we analyze just one aspect of a situation and ignore a multitude of others. I think the book is one of the best I have ever read on health. The last two chapters, setting forth his "diet" • and then giving us that "diet" • with notes letting us see how we are being misled by the claims set forth in it, are the best. If I read nothing else of the book, I would read and re read those two chapters. This book will not deter me from reading an endless plethora more of books on health, nutrition, and vitamins, but it will help me to analyze them even better, much better, than I have in the past. As I have said already, it is one of the best books I have ever read on the topic. Carol Fay

awesome book

Raises important questions around our problems in dealing with the science of healthy food, both as

a society and as individuals.

This small book made me get a grip on my obsession with food and food articles and ingredients and health benefits and so on and so on. I have decided to practice the one premise of the book, and regardless of the author's qualifications his thoughts and research were thought provoking, and in my case a relief to read.

A good myth buster

An excellent book that examines most of the myths surrounding food and the hysterical reaction of both the media and the general public to whatever the latest "studies" purport to show. Whatever diet you are currently on, this book is for you.

Don't trust the reviews from people who either explicitly state or clearly have not read the book. Dr. Levinovitz's goal is not to tell you that you're dumb or that your symptoms are fake. His goal is to help you stop feeling scared/worried about the types of food that are regular staples of our diets. This book walks you through the history of food fads and provides explanations for why we all latch onto these food fads from a mythological point of view. This book did a great job of making me feel less nervous about enjoying the occasional dessert after dinner (is that much sugar going to cause me to be addicted to it? Am I going to gain a ton of weight? As it turns out, no.) I can now easily identify tropes and logical fallacies made in food fad arguments. I have two criticisms of the book: first, I don't think the author gives enough credit toward vegetarians/vegans for -ethical- arguments regarding their diets. He rightfully critiques the health-based arguments against the consumption of meat, but there are people out there who don't believe in any of that nonsense yet still refrain from eating animal products. I understand that the focus of the book is on people's health claims, but putting in a paragraph or two about that would help prevent alienating some of his audience. Second, I felt that his closing argument---eat what you want in moderation---wasn't as well supported as it could have been. He seems to make an appeal to common sense, which is exactly what he criticized all throughout the book. He explains that research generally supports that decreasing caloric intake and increasing exercise results in weight loss, but that isn't quite the same claim. Is there really no medical literature on the all-calories-are-equal hypothesis? I think the book would have benefited from a closer examination and discussion of this hypothesis. Dr. Levinovitz is very respectful in his critiques of food fads and their supporters, recognizing when the motivations

behind developing a food fad are based in genuine concern for patients' maladies. But the pathway to hell is paved with good intentions, and they do not necessarily make for good science. So if you're open to having your assumptions regarding food challenged and are interested in the history of food fads, this is a great book for you. If you're dead set on maintaining your fad diet against all arguments and evidence to the contrary, pass this one up without giving Dr. Levinovitz unfairly bad book reviews.

Of course, there are lots of people out there who like to think that there are evil conspiracies to make food "bad" and very often these same people lack any credible evidence or even demonstrable critical thinking behind their accusations. The Gluten Lie looks at the origins of some of these popular food myths, some of which literally date back thousands of years, to show how much of the food debate is more "religious" in nature than scientific. Filled with citations--many of which I have looked up and read--this book is written in a thoughtful tone to help share an understanding of what really drives our beliefs about food and diet. This is a great book for those who want a more nuanced look into why we believe what we believe about food and diet.

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