

SALT SUGAR FAT

How the Food Giants Hooked Us • Michael Moss

Published in 2013, **Salt Sugar Fat** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning exposé on the processed food industry. Through years of research and interviews with industry insiders, Michael Moss reveals how "Big Food" uses science to override human biology for corporate profit.

The Unholy Trinity: The Three Pillars

SUGAR

The "Bliss Point":

Scientists calculate the precise amount of sweetness that triggers maximum pleasure in the brain without becoming cloying.

FAT

The "Mouthfeel":

Fat has no clear bliss point; our brains generally want more. The industry focuses on the texture and creaminess as it melts on the tongue.

SALT

The "Flavor Burst":

Salt provides an immediate sensory hit and masks the bitter, chemical aftertastes resulting from high-heat factory processing.

Key Industry Insights

- **The Tobacco Playbook:** When tobacco giants like Philip Morris acquired food brands (e.g., Kraft), they applied aggressive, addictive marketing strategies to food products.
- **Targeting "Heavy Users":** Like the alcohol industry, food companies focus marketing efforts on the segment of the population that consumes the highest volume of their products.
- **The Low-Fat Illusion:** In the 1980s, when fat was demonized, companies replaced it with massive quantities of sugar to maintain taste, maintaining the calorie count while appearing "healthy."
- **Internal Skepticism:** Many top executives and scientists behind these products strictly avoid eating them, recognizing their addictive and health-eroding nature.

The Death of the Home Cook

As societal structures changed and demand for convenience grew, Big Food introduced "time-savers" like *Lunchables* and *Capri Sun*. These highly engineered items eventually

displaced traditional whole-food cooking, reshaping the modern palate and global health.

Summary Document • Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us