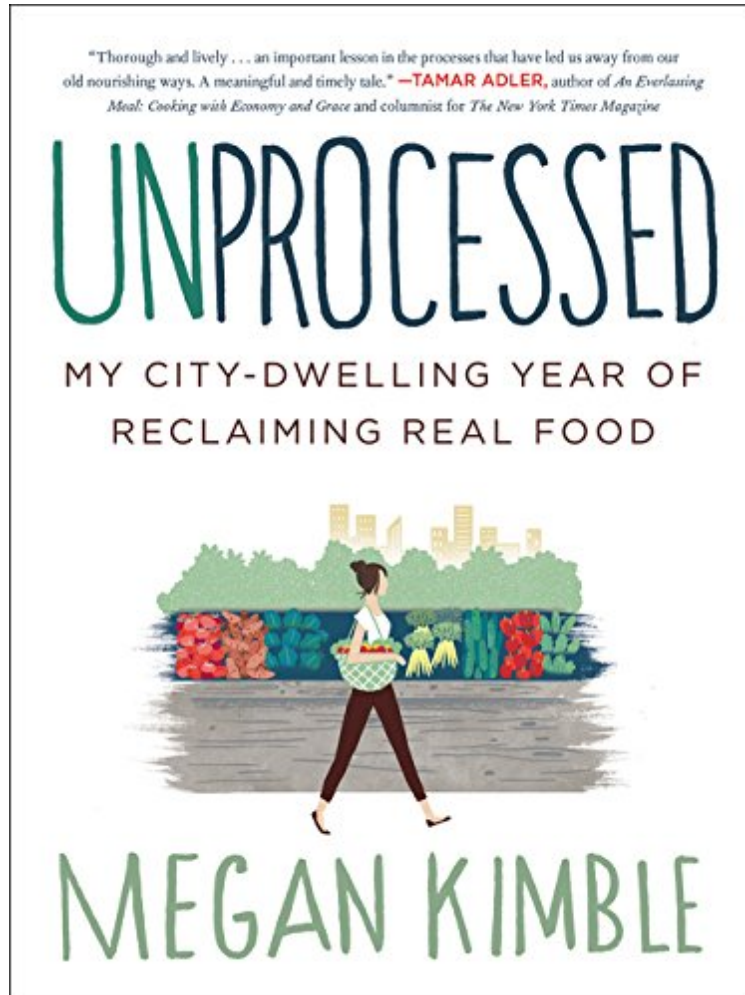


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## Unprocessed: My City-Dwelling Year of Reclaiming Real Food

Megan Kimble

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**Megan Kimble : Unprocessed: My City-Dwelling Year of Reclaiming Real Food** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Unprocessed: My City-Dwelling Year of Reclaiming Real Food:

264 of 276 people found the following review helpful. Not a Bad Book, Just Not What I'd Hoped By SonjastwinI wanted to like this book much more than I did. Or, perhaps, to be more accurate, I should say that it's not so much that I disliked the book as it is that it wasn't really what I'd hoped it would be. Let's just start by saying that it's a well-written book that's easy to read. The author is likeable, enough. There's nothing distasteful or irritating about it. That said, I felt a bit misled by the title. The bulk of the book is more about the processes that bring food to our tables, highly processed and otherwise. If you want to know things like what differentiates white flour from whole grain flour,

how milk gets from the cow to your supermarket, how produce makes it from the fields to the supermarket, or how meat is butchered, then you will enjoy this book. But even though I did pick up some new information, I felt like I'd read much of this book before. Indeed, if you've read any Michael Pollan, Mark Bittman or the like, a lot of this information will not be new to you. What I had really hoped for, based on the title, was more first-hand accounts of the experience of eating unprocessed for an entire year. Even for someone like me, whose food philosophy probably aligns pretty closely with the author's, I can't imagine doing this for a month let alone an entire year. I wanted to understand more about the challenges and practicalities of doing this, particularly on a limited budget. For example, did it take more time to cook than before she started the project? Seems like it must have. If yes, how did she find the extra time? What did she do after a long, hard day at work when the last thing she wanted to do was cook? Did she have any uncontrollable cravings for junk food? She says in the last chapter that she spent 27% of her income over the year on food. I'm all for spending more for quality food and to support the people who produce it, but that's a staggering sum to spend on food when you're not making much to begin with. I wonder how much she was spending before and what financial sacrifices, if any, she had to make to spend such a significant sum on food. Only the chapter on hunger really begins to touch on the issues of affordability, but not in great depth. And other questions like those I've mentioned, if they're addressed at all, felt like fleeting references. I wanted to come away from this book understanding how an average person, with all the challenges of modern life, could really make something like this work. Or at least move closer to it. Instead, I came away thinking that the author was not average at all. I had the distinct impression that this project was not far removed from how she had been living before. Like a person that drinks 1% milk their entire life who decides to switch to skim, it might taste a bit watery for a week or two, but it's not that big a deal. It seems to me that this was how it was for the author. Although she hints at struggles and challenges, you see little evidence of them and get few recommendations for how to address them if your transition is not quite so painless. At the end of the day, the book was pleasant enough; I just think there were some missed opportunities. It's easy to find books that discuss the downsides of industrial agriculture and processed foods and the benefits of a whole foods diet and organics. I can't say that I've seen one that presents a realistic portrait of how actual people with limited time and resources follow such a diet on a daily basis and make it tasty at the same time. I really wished this book would have been more of the latter than the former. That said, I'd probably read another book by this author.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Megan Kimble's journey is inspiring and empowering, as well as an engaging story from an excellent writer. By Northwoodsmom I loved this book so much, I wanted to contact the author, so I'll share my message as a review: "I just wanted to say thank you for your book and for writing candidly about your journey! I'm a rural-living mom of eight who has run the gamut of food advice from trying to eat unprocessed all the way to falling completely off the wagon when I get overwhelmed and confused about how to eat. My recent low point was when a friend with two kids and an all-organic budget posted on social media, "Eat like you give a crap about yourself!" What does that even mean?? I needed some serious encouragement! Your book was just the toolbox I needed to begin unprocessing my family once again according to my own values and resources of time, energy, and finances. It was a great refresher course for what I already knew and tons of new information that I didn't. Maybe it seems that you and I wouldn't have much in common, but I related so much to the challenges you encountered and decisions you made along the way. I read your book on vacation, even though I swore I'd read nothing but cheesy romance novels by the pool. Your book looked like a fun read, so I threw it in with my selected novels, and I'm SO glad I did! Not only was it a really great story, I returned to my empty refrigerator feeling encouraged and empowered to fill it up with real food that's better for my family, and motivated to vote with my dollars for non-industrial food. I'm a voluntaryist (anarchist) by the way, so understanding our food system and why it's messed up and having the tools to make small changes where I'm at gave me such an emotional lift! Feeling like our food is killing us and we can't do a thing about it is depressing. "Unprocessed" showed me that I have a voice and the ability to make a difference for my little tribe and for society as a whole. Thank you again, and keep up the great work!"

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. full of great information By debi I admire her for her hard work and thorough exploration. For me I needed more story perhaps. It is a good resource book. I liked the piece about wheat and flour, I had not heard as much info as she was able to provide by her experience. I did find this a bit hard to stay focused on. I had to reread many parts. I thought it all interesting though and Megan's dedication a great help in learning about what is happening to our food and drink.

In the tradition of Michael Pollan's bestselling *In Defense of Food* comes this remarkable chronicle, from a founding editor of *Edible Baja Arizona*, of a young woman's year-long journey of eating only whole, unprocessed foods intertwined with a journalistic exploration of what unprocessed really means, why it matters, and how to afford it. In January of 2012, Megan Kimble was a twenty-six-year-old living in a small apartment without even a garden plot to her name. But she cared about where food came from, how it was made, and what it did to her body: so she decided to go an entire year without eating processed foods. *Unprocessed* is the narrative of Megan's extraordinary year, in which she milled wheat, extracted salt from the sea, milked a goat, slaughtered a sheep, and more all while earning an income that fell well below the federal poverty line. What makes a food processed? As Megan would soon realize, the

answer to that question went far beyond cutting out snacks and sodas, and became a fascinating journey through Americas food system, past and present. She learned how wheat became white; how fresh produce was globalized and animals industrialized. But she also discovered that in daily life, as she attempted to balance her project with a normal social lifewhich included datingthe question of what made a food processed was inextricably tied to gender and economy, politics and money, work and play.Backed by extensive research and wide-ranging interviewsand including tips on how to ditch processed food and transition to a real-food lifestyleUnprocessed offers provocative insights not only on the process of food, but also the processes that shape our habits, communities, and day-to-day lives.

Part Fast Food Nation, part Eat Pray Love, its perfect for a flight or train ride. (Self)Unprocessed is a beautifully written and refreshingly honest look at the sticky business of making ethical and responsible food choices in our current food landscape. (Bon Apptit)In grappling with these personal, day-to-day decisions, Kimble makes a thoughtful contribution to the greater conversation about how we go about changing the food system. (Sierra Club)In Megans thorough and lively search for a diet of real food, she delivers an important lesson in the processes that have led us away from our old nourishing ways. A meaningful and timely tale. (Tamar Adler, author of An Everlasting Meal: Cooking with Economy and Grace and contributing writer to the New York Times Magazine)An important book for all of us who live and breathe and eat in America. I thought I knew this material, but I couldnt put the book down and I came away from it recharged and better informed . . . fresh and smart, but also wise. (Deborah Madison, author of Vegetable Literacy and The New Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone)Megan Kimble is the freshest voice in literary food writing since Dan Barber and Tamar Adler . . . a stunning debut by a perceptive observer of how food systems actually work . . . in disarmingly graceful prose that will stay in your memory for years to come. (Gary Paul Nabhan, author of the award-winning Growing Food in a Hotter Drier Land and Coming Home to Eat)Unprocessed should be required reading for every American eater. In this engrossing tale, Kimble lets us tag along as she processes our flawed food system and unprocesses her kitchen. Kimbles candor and can-do spirit empower and inspire. (Jonathan Bloom, author of American Wasteland)I love how Megan effortlessly intertwines her story with all that she learned about the food we eat and how its processed . . . a refreshingly simple approach on where to draw the line. (Lisa Leake, #1 New York Times bestselling author of 100 Days of Real Food)A very personal and honest report of her year-long effort . . . and many practical tips for improving our ways of eating without spending a fortune. An engaging read with valuable information. (Andrew Weil, M.D., bestselling author of True Food: Seasonal, Sustainable, Simple, Pure)[Megan Kimble]...has covered poverty and food justice issues, informal food economies, food bank innovations, and roadside stands with equal insight and grace... this extraordinary writer...has taken risks wherever she has gone, and created gems along the way. (Gary Paul Nabhan, PhD., W.K. Kellogg Endowed Chair in Sustainable Food Systems, University of Arizona, The New York Times-contributor and author of 12 food history and culture books)The book is full of fresh insights about the way communities are tied to food systems. (High Country News)From the Back CoverMegan Kimble was a twenty-six-year-old living in a small apartment without even a garden plot to her name. But she knew that she cared about where her food came from, how it was made, and what it did to her bodyso she decided to go an entire year without eating processed foods. Unprocessed is the narrative of Megan's extraordinary year, in which she milled wheat, extracted salt from the sea, milked a goat, slaughtered a sheep, and moreall while she was a busy, broke city-dweller.What makes a food processed? The answer to that question went far beyond cutting out snacks and sodas, and led to a fascinating journey through America's food system, past and present. Megan learned how wheat became white, how fresh produce was globalized, and how animals were industrialized. But she also discovered that in daily lifeconjuring meals while balancing a job, social life, and even datingour edible futures are inextricably tied to gender and economy, politics and money, work and play.Backed by extensive research and wide-ranging interviews, and including tips on how to ditch processed food and transition to a real-food lifestyle, Unprocessed offers provocative insights not only on the process of food but also the processes that shape our habits, communities, and day-to-day lives. About the AuthorMegan Kimble is a food writer living in Tucson, Arizona, where she works as the managing editor of Edible Baja Arizona, a local-foods magazine serving Tucson and the borderlands. She is a regular contributor to the Los Angeles Times and serves on the leadership council of the Pima County Food Alliance. She earned her MFA from the University of Arizona and works with the university's Southwest Center to promote food access and justice.