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The Taste of Sweet: Our Complicated Love Affair with Our Favorite Treats

Joanne Chen

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Dismissed as déclassé by gourmands, blamed for the scourge of obesity, and yet loved by all, the taste of sweet has long been at the center of both controversy and celebration. For anyone who has ever felt conflicted about a cupcake, this is a book to sink your teeth into. In *The Taste of Sweet*, unabashed dessert lover Joanne Chen takes us on an unexpected adventure into the nature of a taste you thought you knew and reveals a world you never imagined.

Sweet is complicated, our individual relationships with it shaped as much by childhood memories and clever marketing as the actual sensation of the confection on the tongue. How did organic honey become a luxury while high-fructose corn syrup has been demonized? Why do Americans think of sweets as a guilty pleasure when other cultures just enjoy them? What new sweetener, destined to change the very definition of the word sweet, is being perfected right now in labs around the world?

Chen finds the answers by visiting sensory scientists who study taste buds, horticulturalists who are out to breed the perfect strawberry, and educators who are researching the link between class and obesity. Along the way she sheds new light on a familiar taste by exploring the historical sweetscape through the banquet tables of emperors, the pie safes of American pioneers, the corporate giants that exist to fulfill our every sweet wish, and the desserts that have delighted her throughout the years. This fabulously entertaining story of sweet will change the way you think about your next cookie.

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