



CULINARY INTELLIGENCE  
THE ART OF EATING HEALTHY (AND REALLY WELL)  
PETER KAMINSKY

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## **Culinary Intelligence: The Art of Eating Healthy (and Really Well)** Peter Kaminsky

For many of us the idea of healthy eating equals bland food, calorie counting, and general joylessness. Or we see the task of great cooking for ourselves as a complicated and expensive luxury beyond our means or ability. Now Peter Kaminsky—who has written cookbooks with four-star chefs (for example, Daniel Boulud) and no-star chefs (such as football legend John Madden)—shows us that anyone can learn to eat food that is absolutely delicious and doesn't give you a permanently creeping waistline.

Just a couple years ago, Kaminsky found himself facing a tough choice: lose weight or suffer the consequences. For twenty years, he had been living the life of a hedonistic food and outdoors writer, an endless and luxurious feast. Predictably, obesity and the very real prospect of diabetes followed. Things had to change. But how could he manage to get healthy without giving up the things that made life so pleasurable? In *Culinary Intelligence*, Kaminsky tells how he lost thirty-five pounds and kept them off by thinking more—not less—about food, and he shows us how to eat in a healthy way without sacrificing the fun and pleasure in food.

*Culinary Intelligence* shows us how we can do this in everyday life: thinking before eating, choosing good ingredients, understanding how flavor works, and making the effort to cook. Kaminsky tells us what we need to give up (most fast food and all junk food) and what we can enjoy in moderation (dessert and booze), but he also shows us how to tantalize our tastebuds by maximizing flavor per calorie, and he makes delectably clear that if we eat delicious, flavorful foods, we'll find ourselves satisfied with smaller portions while still enjoying one of life's great pleasures.

## **Culinary Intelligence: The Art of Eating Healthy (and Really Well) Details**

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**Peter Kaminsky**

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## From Reader Review Culinary Intelligence: The Art of Eating Healthy (and Really Well) for online ebook

### Kristen says

A couple of fun personal stories and recipes, though nothing earth-shattering. If you're up on contemporary food writing, most of the text is pretty familiar. The big idea here is flavor per calorie: eat the best most flavorful food you can, and it will enable you to be satisfied taking in less. (With the caveat that you follow a few other rules of healthy eating) Honestly, not sure a whole book was needed to express Kaminsky's ideas. A nice magazine essay would have been enough.

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### Cameron says

Man this book took me a long time to finish! I just couldn't get into the writing style, I think. This book... meanders, quite a lot. I was expecting a more straightforward discussion of techniques the author used to go from being a very out-of-shape overweight food critic to trimming down all that fat, but still being able to enjoy food as much as he does. Instead he only touched on these things here and there amidst long, drawn-out passages detailing his culinary travels, the chefs he knows, the restaurants he goes to, and all the rich food he's eaten.

He would go on and on at length about these things, and only throw in a passage here and there about eating healthy. He had a couple of sections devoted to, for example, lists of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables, how to prepare certain foods in a more healthy manner, or how to better shop to stock your cabinets with healthy choices. But if he'd focused solely on the thesis of the book, which is using food knowledge to make healthier choices that actually excite the palate and help you control your weight at the same time, the book would've been about a third the length.

He filled the rest with so many stories of eating rich foods, visiting far-off places and hobnobbing with chefs that I often forgot what the book was supposed to be about. "When will he actually get back to the subject of this book?" is something I asked myself over and over again, which is why this book took me so long to finish. He would seem to almost contradict himself at times as well, waxing on about some rich delicacy and the wonderful experiences he's had with family and friends while enjoying it, only to throw in a phrase at the end like "Of course, I don't eat like this anymore. And neither should you." And then he launched into another several pages of travelogue.

Overall, I would've preferred a book that was one-third in length, but ALL about CI ("Culinary Intelligence") and FPC ("Flavor Per Calorie") and many, many more specific techniques and practices to accomplish this. Instead it seemed he had a page count quota to fill so he could justify the sales price of the book, which just ended up detracting from the true message altogether for me.

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### Kyle Henderson says

Since I recently began a personal quest to prepare more of my own food from scratch, this boom came

around at just the right time. It's not a cookbook by any means, but it gave me a great foundation for what it truly means to cook simply using the best ingredients possible. Things really don't have to be complicated. The genesis for this book was the author's need to shed a few pounds. This means the focus was on great food that won't add weight, something else I can relate to.

It only gets 3 stars from me because the writing style is a bit too "rambly" for my taste. He jumped around a lot and told so many stories I sometimes lost the point of that particular section. However, it was a fun pool read and taught me a few things I have already put to use.

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## Nada says

Review first published on my blog: <http://memoriesfrombooks.blogspot.com...>

The subtitle to Culinary Intelligence - the art of eating healthy and really well - describes its purpose. Peter Kaminsky is a long time food writer. Over time, his career in food led to unhealthy eating habits and health concerns. This book culls his experience and lessons learned in his journey back to health. In that sense, it is another diet book.

As far as diet books go, this one mirrors the ideas of many that have come before. Eat for quality not quantity. Buy the best ingredients and then cook them well. When you eat flavorful, satisfying food, you are satisfied with smaller portions.

The author coins the concept of "flavor per calorie" or FPC. The goal of his diet becomes to maximize FPC. Some of the ways in which he does this stem from his worldwide experiences in the food industry. As such, I did not find some of the ideas or examples applicable to my life.

My favorite part of this book was the focus on the idea summarized in the quote above. These days, so much of the food literature focuses on nutrients - calories, fat, protein, carbohydrates, macronutrients, antioxidants and so on. I liked that this book highlights that food is not simply the sum total of its parts, but it can be something more. While focus on nutrition is key to a healthy body, we need to keep in mind more than that to evolve an overall healthy lifestyle.

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## Beth says

I really enjoyed this book. It was straightforward and spoke to my inner home chef. It inspired me to be creative in order to eat healthier and add more flavor.

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## Jessica says

This book was much more readable than I thought it would be. Peter Kaminsky was a food writer who very much enjoyed cooking and eating. But when his doctor told him he needed to lose weight or he would die an earlier death, Kaminsky decided to completely change his way of eating. He knew he couldn't completely cut out certain foods completely, so he established what he calls *Culinary Intelligence* - how to eat smarter without sacrificing taste and flavor. He describes Culinary Intelligence as "Buy the best ingredients you can afford. Cook them well." (p.21) Kaminsky also says that Culinary Intelligence "...rests on three pillars: 1. Don't eat processed foods. 2. Buy the best, most full-flavored ingredients you can afford. 3. Make those

ingredients even better by cooking: the surest way to maximum FPC (Flavor Per Calorie)." (p.209) By following this line of eating and thinking about his food more, not less, Kaminsky was able to lose 35 pounds and keep it off - all without sacrificing flavorful food. Although Kaminsky himself admits that Culinary Intelligence is not rocket science, with the fast-paced, fast food culture in America all too often it's very hard to eat whole, real food. He talks about the struggle to follow Culinary Intelligence when traveling or eating at restaurants. Overall, this was a very readable book with lots of great suggestions for eating better. He also includes a few of his favorite recipes at the end of the book.

Here are a few quotes I really liked:

"Life is never that simple. Adding broccoli to your diet because some study said it fights cancer; cutting down on one kind of fat because a lab rat ate itself to death on a diet of lamb liver; consuming expensive four-ounce containers of yogurt in hopes that its bacteria will bless you with the life span of a redwood tree are not realistic hopes. Nothing you put in your body has just one effect. Everything is multifaceted and interrelated. A diet of whole foods has all the nutrients we need." (p. 30)

"The fundamental rule before buying and ultimately eating anything could not be simpler: Think! Think before you shop for food, even - or especially - if you need a quick snack; think while you are choosing items at the market or on a menu; think while you are cooking; and think while you are eating. Only through buying, cooking, ordering, and eating thoughtfully can you dial out the marketing noise and resist the thousand subliminal invitations to consume high-calorie, high-fat, super-sweet, chemically engineered food. Wherever you turn they cry out, 'Buy me! Eat me!'" (p.98)

"It is never simply a matter of saying, 'Listen to your body,' although that sounds reassuring in a New Age kind of way. Your body got you into this mess in the first place. It likes the combinations of sugar and salt and fat. It has a million generations of ancestors in its Darwinian cheering section screaming, 'Go for it!'" (p.184)

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## Saritha says

If you're looking for books on flavour, this one does a compelling job of showing you how salt-sugar-fat have been used to amplify flavour in dishes that aren't quite made with the best ingredients or those at the peak of their flavour. There are a few recipes at the back of the book, but most of the book is about Peter Kaminsky's transition to healthier food despite being a food critic.

If you hate the word diet, love food and also want to be healthy, this is a good place to seek how someone with an occupational stake in the food industry went about doing just that.

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## Al says

This is a book about how to go from an overweight, well-off, food writer with an extremely finely-tuned palate and a wealth of successful food world friends to the same but at a healthy weight. Not particularly useful for normal folk. That's not to say there aren't some good lessons and eating guidelines in here, just that this guy's situation is extremely unique. Try Mark Bittman's *Food Matters* for a similarly themed book that is much more useful for the average eater.

## Wouter says

I agree with most other reviewers: Kaminsky's writing style is actually pretty good, but the contents of this book are discouraging. He tells personal tales, always starting with "with famous chef X at cool restaurant Y, I've had epiphany Z". Mostly, those epiphanies - which should be the "art of eating healthy", are much better explained in other books. And that's really too bad because I actually quite like personal tales and stories instead of boring representations of things which are good and things which are not. It's just that Peter's book reads like an elitist fairytale which the "normal people" would not be able to do.

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## Shannon says

It is rare that I dislike a book as much as I disliked this one! To make my complaints quick: the author was NOT really talking about health and nutrition as implied, only about calories and weight, the writing felt pompous and elitist - definitely for a certain socioeconomic class, and it felt like he thought his audience was also very unintelligent. Oh! And he made no real acknowledgement that a growing population of Americans are vegetarians or vegans - the assumption was meat must always be factored in to the equation.

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## Caroline says

I hadn't read anything of Peter Kaminsky's before this book, I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing. In any case, I more or less expected this to be a book about how to lose weight while eating really good food. There is some good advice in the book (learn to cook, avoid processed foods), but truly this book is a food memoir. It's one story after another starting with "once when my good friend [insert name of Michelin 3-star chef here] was visiting/showing me how he cooks stuff/invited me to his restaurant ... " or else it's "once when i was in the rural wilds of Wyoming/Africa/Italy/France ... " Now, if that's what you're looking for, then this is a great book for you. But if you want advice about how to be a great cook, how to eat right, how to enjoy your food, etc. I don't think this is a very useful book. Michael Pollan and others have covered all of that material and much more thoroughly and helpfully. And if you want to read rhapsodies about wonderful food that make you want to run into the kitchen and cook, MFK Fisher is a much better read. Sorry, Mr. Kaminsky, I wanted to love your book, but it just didn't work for me.

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## Katie Rayl says

Yes yes yes! This book put into words what I already believed. Healthy eating can and should be delicious, bordering on hedonistic. Kaminsky was a food writer and restaurant reviewer for years, and over the course of his career put on some serious pounds. When he was turned down for a life insurance renewal because of his health he decided he needed to make some changes. But being a serious foodie, along with having an ultra-sensitive palate, he did not want to give up on the foods he enjoys. Kaminsky suggests that we don't have to give up on really enjoyable food, if we focus on fresh, quality ingredients along with what he terms FPC's (flavor per calorie). You don't have to live off yogurt, nuts, and berries alone if you want to be a healthy size. Some of the book is not practical for every day use. Most of us do not have the luxury of hiking

through spanish villages searching for a certain kind of acorn-fed pig because it is the best in the world. But the basic principle of cooking fresh, flavorful, in-season food as opposed to stuffing our faces with whatever is convenient (even if it is healthy) is very appealing to me. This book seriously made my mouth water. It might be important to note that this is not a book about calorie counting, or even what not to eat. It is not in any way a diet program, or a How-To-Get-Skinny guide. It is simply one man's opinion on how to change your attitude about the food you eat, and how to enjoy the journey. If you love food, you will love this book!

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### **Jackie says**

Written by food writer Peter Kaminsky this book is really just a regurgitation of information that has been around for awhile. He obviously wrote this book for New Yorkers who eat out all the time as many of his ideas have no meaning for the common person. Found him condescending and while I can't say why it's really not worth analyzing. He touches on his Flavor per Calorie idea that supposedly helped him lose thirty-five pounds. This whole FPC idea seemed like an add on to make this book appear to say something worthwhile. Publisher must be his buddy. First one star I have ever given.

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### **A.J. says**

I approve of a lot of what Peter Kaminsky is saying in this book: not eating processed foods, using good ingredients and learning how to cook them. Given that these are his central tenets, I found the descriptions of fabulous restaurant meals prepared for him by amazing chefs a little hard to stomach after a while. There's a lot of place- and person-name dropping in the book, which doesn't interest me at all. And it really read in places like an extended advertisement for all the other books he's written. Didn't work, I'm afraid.

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### **Amy says**

For someone interested in revamping the way they eat, without dieting and diet products, this would be a great fit. I would have liked this book more if I hadn't already read "Salt Sugar Fat" by Michael Moss, "In Defense of Food" by Michael Pollan, and "Ruhlman's Twenty" by Michael Ruhlman (so many Michaels!). If you were going to just pick one book on eating rather than several, this would be a good option.

I whole-heartedly agree with some of his statements:

"You can read every diet book in the store. You can shop locally, seasonally, sustainably. You can count calories and avoid franchises. But only cooking leaves you fully in charge of what you eat and how it is prepared"

and, on making your own salad dressing:

"...it will also cut down on the cloying, creamy, and chemicalized flavor profile that is the hallmark of processed food. The more we eat such food, the more conditioned we become to expect it in everything we eat. Culinary Intelligence is, in part, about dialing out the marketing noise and deconditioning yourself.

I was not at all interested in the name dropping Kaminsky included and far more interested in the practical tools like an outline of his weekly eating plan. I appreciate how much he stressed the importance of planning, and how realistic he is about how people make food decisions (basically without a plan, we default to the

less healthy choices). All of this had the common theme running through it that eating should be enjoyable and not stripped down to a dietary science full of rules and restriction.

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