

Chemicals Masquerading as Food *Masquerading* as Nutrition

Try your luck at identifying the product behind these ingredients: *Cooked beans, water, tomato puree, light brown sugar, sugar, invert sugar, molasses, cottonseed oil, high fructose corn syrup, salt, modified food starch, pork, onion powder, spice and apple concentrate.* Does that sound yummy to you? That is what you consume when you enjoy a can of Campbell's Baked Beans. In the words of cookbook author Sally Fallon, it is an "impoverished concoction" well worth avoiding if you are striving for optimum health: "...when we enrich the food conglomerates by buying their impoverished concoctions, we jeopardize our own health and personal prosperity".

Fallon's book *Nourishing Traditions* offers several examples of ingredients that make up best-selling products. Here is another one: *Whole wheat, sugar, tricalcium and dicalcium (provides calcium), salt, malt extract, corn syrup, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), zinc and iron (mineral nutrients), vitamin E (tocopherol acetate), trisodium phosphate, a B vitamin (niacinamide), a B vitamin (calcium pantothenate), annatto extract color, vitamin A (palmitate), vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin mononitrate), a B vitamin (folic acid),*

vitamin B12, and vitamin D. Freshness preserved with BHT.

Before we peek at what this is let's examine the list of ingredients once more. Does it sound delicious? Does it appear nutritious? If you ate this for breakfast do you think you would feel satiated and fortified for a productive morning? Are you surprised to learn that these are the ingredients of the popular breakfast cereal Whole Grain Total?

Junk in food causes malnourishment and obesity.

The sad and difficult fact is that the majority of products in today's supermarkets are indeed impoverished concoctions, masquerading as healthy options for us and our families. In this wealthy and prosperous country we have growing numbers of children and adults who are malnourished AND

obese! Part of the problem is the vast array of colorful and attractive packages in the supermarket aisles that offer the promise of health, vigor and flat bellies but are in fact damaging our brains and bodies and making us fat!

Familiar food fixits.

The food industry spends millions of dollars annually to lull us into a false sense of savvy satiety. "Consume this cereal, feel great and lose weight!" "Pour a can of soup over some white rice and enjoy a comforting feast with your family." "Send

your kids to school with plastic wrapped lunch kits and nourish their bodies and imagination!"

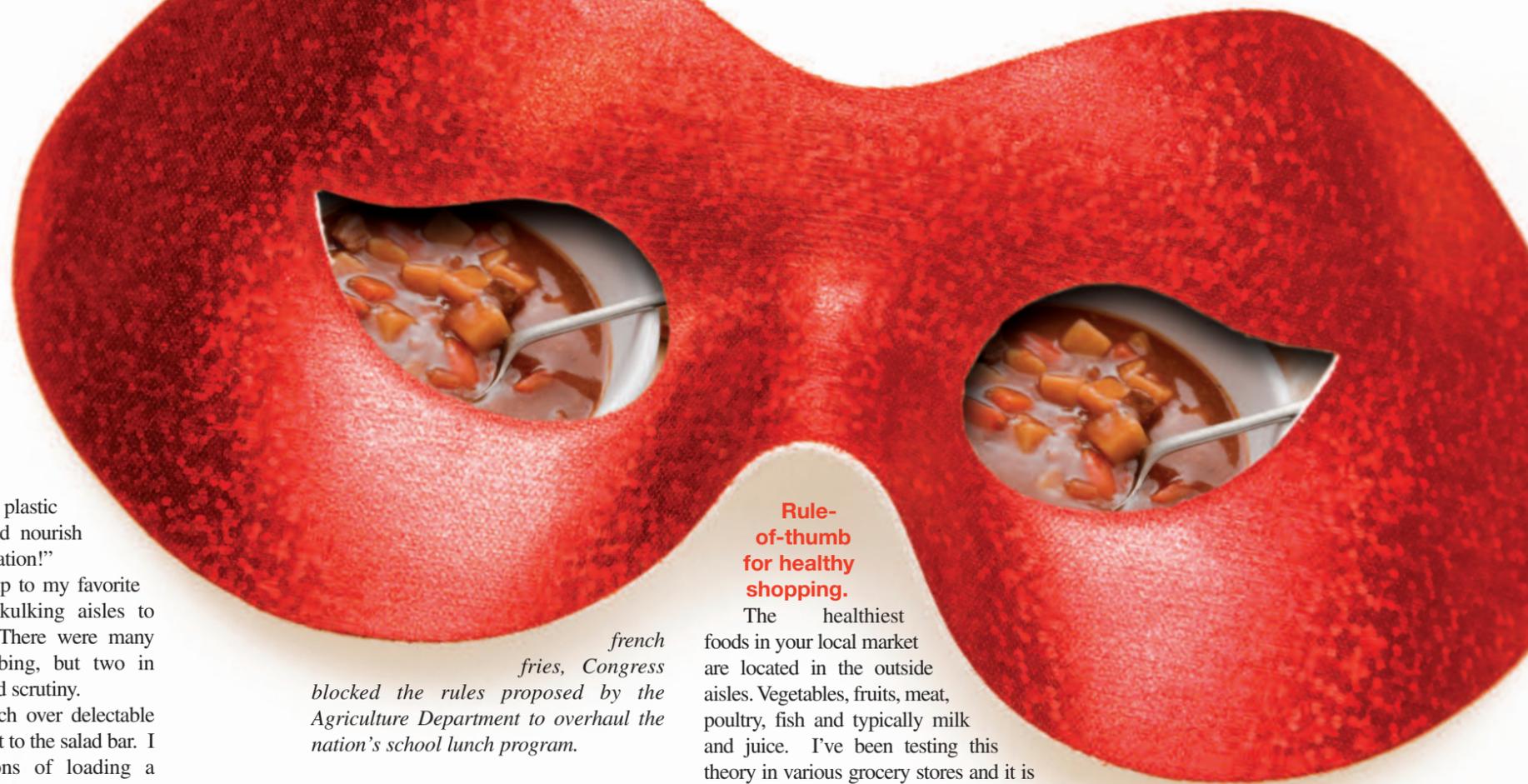
During a recent trip to my favorite supermarket, I was skulking aisles to research this article. There were many things I found disturbing, but two in particular that demanded scrutiny.

First, I had to reach over delectable processed desserts to get to the salad bar. I had the best intentions of loading a styrofoam container with crisp greens, spinach, colorful peppers, shredded carrots and so forth, but had to lean over a tray of cherry-sauce covered cheesecake to get to it. That's just wrong!

Go past the packaging.

Secondly, I discovered a crustless peanut butter and jelly sandwich wrapped in plastic with a list of ingredients that reads like a high-level science experiment. We're talking about bread, peanut butter, and jelly, right? But to make it possible for this "impoverished concoction" to sit in a grocer's cooler until an unsuspecting child convinces an equally unsuspecting parent to purchase it, it has to be pumped full of preservatives, flavor enhancers, and propped up in a special display.

It's not just supermarket chains pushing chemical-laden substances and labeling it nutrition. Recently, the Department of Agriculture attempted to improve school lunches with a few simple upgrades. The goal was to add more actual vegetables and fruits to the menu and allow less processed food. The food industry balked and convinced Congress to vote it down. The *New York Times* reported: *In a victory for the makers of frozen pizzas, tomato paste and*



Rule-of-thumb for healthy shopping.

The healthiest foods in your local market are located in the outside aisles. Vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry, fish and typically milk and juice. I've been testing this theory in various grocery stores and it is true that the perimeter of the store has food that is **real food**. The aisles in the center of the market contain snacks and soda. But, I saw plenty of processed non-foods inserted in key locations to draw you away from your plans of healthy eating.

For instance, it is typical when you are looking for apples to find plastic containers of caramel sauce nearby. In the spring you'll see highly processed short cakes nestled near the fresh strawberries. Looking for organic vegetables? You are sure to find tubs of vegetable dips nearby that appear to be more petroleum product than a substance worthy of a fresh, crisp vegetable.

What to do?

Choose fresh, nourishing food for yourself and your loved ones and start in whatever way you can—small but determined steps. Perhaps this week add a salad to at least one meal each day. Next week, keep the salad and whip up a fruit smoothie for breakfast.

For ongoing ideas of how to choose healthy foods and prepare them like an experienced chef, check out the website www.whfoods.org. The site was created by George Mateljan, who also published a fabulous cookbook/reference guide, *The*

french fries, Congress blocked the rules proposed by the Agriculture Department to overhaul the nation's school lunch program.

Where is the nutrition?

In Carol Simontacchi's book, *"The Crazy Makers: How the Food Industry is Destroying our Brains and Harming Our Children,"* "Our world is loaded with environmental toxins that trick our endocrine system and disrupt our normal biochemical processes. And possibly most damaging of all is our food culture."

The food lobby stands to lose millions of dollars annually if they are squeezed out of school lunch programs. The so-called "food," imposed as part of the lunch program are the same "impoverished concoctions" so abundantly available in our local markets. And you know what? We all lose when grown ups and children are malnourished; thus, we are unable to realize our potential!



Kindergarten student waiting for his lunch.
Photo from the New York Times

World's Healthiest Foods. This 880-page book provides health benefits of food and shows how to prepare various dishes to preserve or enhance nutrient-richness. You can also sign up for his free newsletter which provides daily recipes. Mateljan's recipes are about nutrition and simplicity. He fully understands how busy and stressed out most people are these days so he makes every effort for your food prep to be quick and easy.

The next time you visit your favorite supermarket give yourself plenty of time and make a game out of reading labels. If you can't pronounce it, you shouldn't eat it! Whatever shows up first on the label is the main ingredient of that product, so if your favorite fruit spread label shows sugar as the first ingredient? Not good!

Let me wrap this up with a couple of tidbits to illustrate how deeply entrenched the food lobby is in our culture—as if being in control of school lunches isn't evidence enough! Do you know who owns the weight loss giant "Jenny Craig?" Nestle—as in Toll House Cookies. And until a few years ago Weight Watchers was owned by Heinz—as in ketchup. Need I say more? Stay healthy! Sally