

Psychology of Food

GUIDED BY COLOR

Our brains are wired to eat bright, colorful foods (because that usually indicates nutrient content). Food manufacturers exploit this instinct by using food coloring and bright packaging to make fake foods more appealing.



CRAVINGS

Think of cravings as your body's cries for nutrients. The exception is cravings for sugar and hyperpalatable foods, which hijack reward pathways in your brain. Cravings for protein, red meat, seafood, healthy fat, vegetables, and even salt are reliable cues to respond to.



LOW-HANGING FRUIT

We crave sweets and carbs because our brains are wired to seek out easy energy from sugar (in nature, that means ripe fruit or honey). We do not have any mechanism to put the brakes on this craving, which is why it is so easy to overeat sugar when it is widely available in our modern world.

HYPERPALATABLE

"Hyper-" means excessive and "palatable" means tasty. You got it, hyperpalatable foods are extremely appealing—to the point of over-riding our body's satiety mechanisms. They activate the same areas of the brain as addictive drugs like cocaine.



HISTORY OF HUMAN EATING AS A FOOTBALL FIELD

For most of history, humans survived on whole foods they could hunt or gather from nature. In other words, our bodies have evolved to thrive on whole, natural foods. Highly-processed modern foods are "new" and foreign to our physiology.

agriculture (~0.5 yd) **modern food** (~4 in)

