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Why You Should Get “Cooked”

While Paula and I were visiting our son and his wife last week, I suggested that all of us watch a series on Netflix called [“Cooked”](#); it’s a series written by Michael Pollan from the book of the same name. I talked about him [early last year](#) and his movie “In Defense of Food.” I had read the book and watched the series earlier, and although Paula doesn’t generally like how-things-are-made programs, she watched a couple of minutes with me and ended up going to bed an hour late.



Each major chapter of the book has been made into a segment that lasts about an hour. The titles define the topic as it relates to cooking: fire, water, air, earth. Each one has been crafted to provide a little common-sense science along with interesting stories and background. I loved the book and now I love the series; the family did as well.

“Cooked” Insights

The series is full of revelations that seem obvious in hindsight, but that you’ve probably never thought about before. Like cookware: humans couldn’t effectively combine the flavors of various foods until a pot was invented that could withstand the heat of the cooking fire. No pot? No boiling. No soup, no stew, no sauces.

And did you know there’d be no chocolate without fermentation? Paula was surprised to learn that about one of her favorite foods.

A thread that ran throughout the series was this: the key role of sharing a meal in the process of human bonding. Mute the phones and leave them in your pockets; spend mealtime loving the ones you’re with. Unless you’re a doctor on call, all those messages will wait.

The Bottom Line

Watch this series on Netflix; you’ll learn more about meat and vegetables and how they’re transformed into food than any other place I can think of. You’ll have a great time learning, and I bet it will change your thinking about food. Paula insisted I warn you that a few scenes in “Fire” are tough to watch, but we’re grown-ups and we need to face the truth about where meat comes from. If you’re watching with your kids (which would be really great), you may want to pre-screen that segment.

My favorite story? The nun with a PhD in microbiology who makes cheese. You’ll begin to understand the microbiome more clearly after you see the “Earth” segment.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet



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