



The Blue Plate: A Food Lover's Guide to Climate Chaos

Mark J. Easter

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Ecologist Mark J. Easter's book *The Blue Plate* proposes means of creating sustainable food systems to address the challenges of climate change.

Divided into sections based around common favorite foods, each chapter highlights a type of ingredient, including beef and corn. At the macro level, the chapters address how the ingredients cause harm to the planet; then, they zoom in for a micro-level look at how their focal ingredients get from earth to table. Following the experiences of farmers, processors, and others in the food supply chain, the book argues that no current food systems exist without some element of ecological harm.

In addition to its doomsday elements, the book proposes hopeful solutions, with instructions on how to keep eating while taking steps toward a brighter environmental landscape. Its proposed solutions include cattle farms creating pastures for cows to graze on rather than relying on the fuel-intensive process of shipping in feed. Indeed, whether it's covering how to choose more sustainable alternatives or showing how farms and companies might create lower-carbon initiatives, the book highlights small solutions that work toward a future in which people are kinder to the environment.

The prose is clear and structured, following a distinct pattern throughout. It first names issues, then says why these are problems, and then illuminates first steps toward solutions. While it's easy to follow, the structure also becomes repetitive. Still, it serves the purpose of making the book educational without being preachy.

The Blue Plate is an excellent primer on where food comes from—with a reminder that if people are what they eat, they need to be conscientious about that consumption.

CHLOE CLARK (September / October 2024)

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