



French Women Don't Get Fat: The Secret of Eating for Pleasure

Mireille Guiliano

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French Women Don't Get Fat: The Secret of Eating for Pleasure Mireille Guiliano

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Drink **Wine**

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Stay **Slim** the **French** way

Experience the *joie de vivre* of *French Women Don't Get Fat* by Mireille Guiliano.

French Women Don't Get Fat: The Secret of Eating for Pleasure Details

Date : Published December 1st 2005 by Random House Large Print Publishing (first published January 1st 2004)

ISBN : 9780375435485

Author : Mireille Guiliano

Format : Hardcover 263 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Food and Drink, Cookbooks, Cultural, France, Food, Cooking

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From Reader Review French Women Don't Get Fat: The Secret of Eating for Pleasure for online ebook

fivethousandbooks says

ok... a chocolate croissant for breakfast?! That is a certainty that I would put a kilo or two on before 9:30am! But I've read so much hype for/against this book so can't wait to read it!

Mar 8 - started this last night and am already halfway through. Que horror!! Ze woman gained 10 kilos in zee visit in zee States! *raise eyebrows* It's not the end of the world honey. Have another glass of bubbly.

Mar 10 - as I continued reading the book, the more annoyed I become. It sounded more and more like we French are better than all of YOU! Especially YOU FAT AMERICANS! We French drink more WATER. We French know our WINES! We French enjoy our glass of bubbly at every meal. We FRENCH have better desserts. Blah blah. And there's a whole spiel on wines and champagnes, etc. Guess what? She's the CEO of Veuve. And common sense, drinking wine and champers at every meal lady, is NOT good FOR YOU!

And buy me a ticket to Paris and I'll point out some fat French women for you.

Aj says

Read in a moment of desperation at my parents' over Xmas vacation. (Picked up from the book exchange in the basement of their NYC building.)

The basic message is that French women don't get fat because they move more than American women, eat good food but in moderation, and enjoy life. I disliked the generalization that American women don't to cook at home, cook what's in season, use good quality ingredients, and to eat in moderation and to try to move more. I disliked her assumption that anyone who exercises in the gym must be in pain and suffering and hating every moment of it. Guiliano is a French transplant who lives in NYC, where it is subjectively easier to move more in a day if one chooses. If one lives in the suburbs or most American cities, I'm sorry "walking to work" is simply not an option. Plus some of us simply enjoy exercising.

Other things I hated: yes, we should drink more water. Her suggestion to drink a "paper cup full" everytime you pass the water cooler and to carry around bottled water is simply disgusting in terms of any sort of environmental concerns. Additionally, her disregard for vegetarianism as a common "fad" among teenage girls was disappointing as well as her lack of knowledge regarding how much protein we need AND her belief that one *needs* dairy to be healthy.

Yes, eating should be pleasureable. Yes, we should not deny ourselves things we enjoy or label food as "good" or "bad." Yes, incorporating movement into daily life, outside the gym, is a good goal. Yes, we should consume foods that are in season and as close to their natural states as possible (ie few processed foods). Yes, we should cook our own foods more.

But all those lessons are common sense and available in most books on nutrition and weight management that are written by individuals better informed by their training as nutritionists or dieticians. Don't read this book. Read Skinny Bitch instead.

da AL says

The idea of staying healthy while enjoying food as well as life -- made me enjoy reading this book more than once!

Suzanne says

Well, that was a pleasant surprise. I avoided this book when it was so immensely popular the way I try to avoid all NYT Best Sellers. How it ended up in my library bag 7 years later is a mystery for the ages.

I have a love/hate relationship with France in which I hate that I love it and I love to hate it. I try to keep my past Francophile leanings on the down low. Sure, I took 4 years of French in college, won the university's French poetry competition (for a dirty limerick I scratched out in 15 minutes) and was my university's French Student of the Year (are you getting a clue of how small this program was?) but that doesn't mean I don't find the French vile and ridiculous. Or does it?

Of course, it doesn't. Or does. That sentence construction was pretty confusing so I'm not really sure now. Whatever, the point is that my ire, as Madame Guiliano seems to notice, has everything to do with the politics. But, non, ce n'est pas vrai. It is also the tendency toward sloth. I despise the French "joie de vivre" because it runs in absolute contradiction to my Calvinistic tendencies to value industrious pursuits over sensual indulgences. How a Southeast Asian Catholic cum atheist came by those tendencies is yet another mystery.

But this philosophy of savoring the sensual indulgences is exactly what helps keep the French in equilibrium. There is no shame in rich food so there is no need to hoard/scarf/smuggle/sneak it by the handful. There will be more bread/chocolate/pastry again soon so you don't have to download as much of it as your 11 stomachs will hold just in case you never encounter it again. Or if, when you do, you've sworn off of it for life. I like this idea because I'm very into self-deprivation but only when it makes sense. And how can depriving yourself of chocolate make sense?

I would like to incorporate some of this way of thinking into my approach to daily eating while maintaining my uniquely American penchant for sweating through multiple layers of very tight clothing of manufactured fibers on frequent bone-shattering runs through the bland suburban landscape that makes nary a nod in the direction of good design. Mireille doesn't see the point in this kind of madness. She prefers the nearly effortless, gentle waving about of the 3-lb weights between hits on her Gauloises. I don't actually know if she smokes but I've hardly touched upon any French stereotypes in this review and that is shameful. Like begging a German to spare my life in exchange for my wife, children, farm and country.

Meredith Holley says

[she gets skinny again (hide spoiler)]

Ganesh says

So, two winters ago when I started to put on a little weight, I didn't sweat it at first. I figured "hey, it's normal to put on a few pounds when it's cold out." But when one morning I had difficulty zipping up my pants, I decided to get serious and apply the ideas from this book.

Confession: in the past, whenever I gained weight, I would call up my closest friend and moan "Omigawd! I'm so faaaat!" Inspired by this book, I decided not to go into hysterics. Instead, I decided to remain calm, love my body unconditionally, and examine how to modify my diet and lifestyle. I concluded that I needed to make two changes:

(1) Stop my recently acquired habit of eating fatty sausages in attempt to save time. (I had figured it was faster than cooking an entire chicken.)

(2) Bundle up and -- instead of driving -- walk to the post office, library, and farmer's market. I had picked a wonderful walkable community to live in but was using using the cold weather as an excuse to be sedentary.

Without much fuss, I made these small changes. And, before I knew it, I got my fairy-tale ending: my favorite jeans and I lived happily -- and comfortably -- ever after.

Oceana2602 says

This is the kind of book your mother gives you for christmas along with the question if it's the new fashion to wear those jeans so tight.

And why, yes, my mother gives this to me (which is why I read the german version, here. Thanks so much, mom.

Still, I have to give it to Mrs Guiliano (who is not my mother, but the author of the book), she knows about food. And eating. And when and what not to eat.

Her "secret" is that you can eat whatever you want, as long as you never eat too much of anything. She suggests you monitor your eating habits for (three?) months before you start changing your ways, and then it will be very very easy to become thin and to stay thin. And, she could be right. I am pretty sure you can lose weight with this book, and not just by carrying it up and down the stairs half an hour each day. (you can also skip her wonder-soup, but it wouldn't be a weightloss book if it didn't have at least one wonder-recipe).

However, I only gave it two stars, because there is nothing new in here for anyone who knows about food

and weightloss, and hah, do I ever know about food and weightloss. So she is really just selling common knowledge - or what should be common knowledge - as the french miracle to losing weight.

Also, as much as I love the french, they did not invent good food. Yes, they may have more of it than us poor little things, but they did not invent it. So please, Mrs. Guiliano, let's be a bit less arrogant, cause I love France and would like to keep it that way.

Thank you.

(Because I know you are wondering: no, I did not lose weight after I read this book. To lose weight, you have to actually do what she says, and I don't follow directions well. Especially not if they are indirectly from my mother. ;-))

Margaret says

According to the list at the back of this book I am culturally French. Who knew?

An odd and interesting little book on Food, the French way of life, and the secrets of French women. The major secret appears to be "Don't feel guilty about what you eat." This is something I can live with.

There are a few interesting recipes scattered throughout the book, which the author cannot appear to decide whether it is a lifestyle book, cookbook, or personal memoir.

Makes for an interesting read.

Recommended.

Rebekah Rodda says

I consider this book life changing. It contains great recommendations for simple healthy lifestyle changes. I credit this book with helping me lose weight after baby number three.

Sally Siawidjaja says

I always got sucked in buying self improvement book hype from money management to diet books. Although most books haven't provide anything new that I haven't known myself, but once in a while I still like to remind myself, perhaps to give me a bit of motivation.

This book has some great points. It reminds the reader to have a healthy lifestyle, to eat home cooked meal with fresh ingredients, to eat in small portions, to eat more fresh fruits, drink more water and do more exercise. It also introduce to gastronomic experience which is eating a different variety of food everyday to avoid eating excessively to compensate for the boredom in the taste of the same food.

However, I live in Indonesia and I disagree with some of her points. I also think some of her advice are not practical for me.

1. French cuisine is not the greatest cuisine in the world. It depends on your cultural eating habits, for example I prefer rice rather than pasta, potatoes or bread. I don't like to drink wine or champagne and prefer to drink tea or milk. French cuisine really doesn't suit me.
2. If you are looking for gastronomic experience, then you shouldn't limit yourself to her French recipe, you should also try Asian, Indian, African, Japanese and many other country cuisine.
I always thought Indonesia is the best place to have the gastronomic experience. We have food from all over the world not only Indonesian food (from escargot to sushi, from broccoli to kangkung). We also have numerous restaurants for those different food from the high quality expensive restaurant for all those European cuisine to the street vendor for the cheap seafood place. ('Please Visit Indonesia year 2009'. : P)
3. Most women such as myself, don't have time to go to the market and cook and use separate plate for different dishes, eat slowly and then you have to wash all of the dishes. It's a waste of time and water.
4. Going to a traditional market in Indonesia is not an enjoyable experience, I would rather buy ingredients from the supermarket. It is cleaner and more organized.
5. High quality food are going to cost more money, so if you have a tight budget, to purchase high quality food all the time is not feasible.
6. Walking everyday to and from the office is also not an enjoyable experience, the weather here is tropical hot, humid, polluted. Some street are dangerous with pickpocket. So even if this method is feasible, I would not recommend it.
7. I also think exercise is the most important thing to lose weight. Based on my experience, if you want to get the body you want, you definitely have to do exercise generously. I found using personal trainer is very helpful to keep you motivated.

On the writing style, although I only read the translated version, I found that she is a bit arrogant and pretentious. She always use French words, which were not translation to English (or Indonesia). This annoys me since I only know a bit of French. If I want to read in French, I would've bought book written in French.

I also wonder does she write the book based on research on the French population or just based on her own life as a French? Although I don't need a scientific research, I still would like to know how many percent from the French population live healthy like she did, how many lose weight because of unhealthy lifestyle (from smoking or not eating at all), how many eat fatty food but lose weight by going to the gym, and how many were actually fat. I would've been more convince that the majority of the French actually did what she said.

This book shouldn't have been published in Indonesia. She only made reference to the American people, all through the book she made comparison between the American way of living with the French. I can only enjoy reading the first few pages. The rest is boring and have no relevance for me.

I would suggest anyone who are serious to lose weight and have the means to pay for it, to appoint their own nutritionist and personal trainer for exercise plan, rather than buying this book.

I don't find any motivation in reading the book and it is definitely not recommended for the Indonesian people.

Molly says

I am not fat.

I haven't ever struggled with my weight, but that doesn't mean that I should eat whatever the hell I want and not expect to gain a few pounds here and there... I have always been fascinated by the way other cultures (non-Americans) have an ability to remain trim, while consuming wine, pastries, etc- and this book explains it! It is about enjoying your food, taking time to prepare it yourself, choosing seasonal fruits and veggies- and purposely indulging in foods you know are a vice.

This is the ant-diet book for women who are not seriously over-weight, but simply have lifestyle changes that need to take place. I wouldn't recommend this as a "lose 10 lbs in a week" magic diet for ladies (you know who you are) looking for the next fad.... I would recommend this book to every day, average American women who want to take better care of their bodies, learn how to pamper themselves, and look and FEEL great about their bodies.

Sound confusing? Read it yourself and find out. you will never look at food the same (or chocolate for that matter)

Kristl says

While I don't believe that French women don't ever get fat, I have to say I was enticed by the tiny woman toting her tiny dog and her wine and baguettes on the cover. Yeah, I admit it. I'm all about the marketing.

I reread this diet book that's a self-proclaimed "not diet book" after the New Year, just to check back in with some concepts that had been blurred by post-wedding gluttony and holiday stretchy pants.

Based on her own experiences, Mireille Guiliano offers a very French answer to a very American problem. If you get lost in that translation, this will not appeal to you. However, I, having been totally misplanted in this country, totally "get" it. If leeks, endive, prunes, soy nuts and plain yogurt sound lovely to you, then you will "get" it also.

It's about treasuring that pain au chocolat, not ordering the Costco-sized serving.

At at rate, it's worth a read even if you just use it to add a few more healthful recipes to your culinary repertoire or a few more healthful tips to your everyday. It will not make you svelte or speak with a sexy accent like Brigitte Bardot.

Unless I did it wrong.

Jonnie says

While I'm not entirely naïve to believe a well-written book can change your life (insert some quote about how change starts with you) - this book was so deliciously and exquisitely worded, and as far as a "non-diet" book can influence an individual like me, consider it done.

Mireille expertly weaves personal experience, lifestyle advice and recipes and makes you fall in love with food. If you are, like me, already in love with food and haven't read this, then be prepared to be absolutely horny for food afterwards. Inappropriate choice of words but hey

While I don't think I will ever sprinkle sugar on cabbage leaves and pretend it's the most delicious thing in the world, some of the recipes are just drool-worthy. Mireille speaks of the French culture with such fondness that at times I wished I lived a small town provincial life in France full of berry gardens, perfectly glazed pastries and tarts and beautiful cutlery. Theoretically, I could make that happen now, but wouldn't it be so much better in the provinces of France? What I like the most though is that **this book actually wants you to give in to your pleasures**. What kind of sorcery is this!?

This is the kind of book that anyone who eats a predominantly Western diet needs to read. And this is not me bagging on the Western diet because *I* eat a Western diet, and I like to think I eat well enough to not succumb to a sugar or fat-induced heart attack. However, Mireille has made me realize that those jam danishes I chow more often than not, those sweet syrupy lattes and those late night trips to McDonalds isn't as tasty as I think they are. I have been duped by the supposed deliciousness that is salty french fries dipped in a McFlurry! Noooooooooooooo.

It's no secret that there is a really unhealthy mentality with diet and exercise in a lot of Western countries. Gyms, juice diets, miracle pills, appetite suppressors (what even???) the list is not only endless, but entirely unnecessary. Mireille's purpose is to show us Westerners what we're missing out on. I mean, three course dinners every night WITH cheese and NO grueling gym workouts? Sign me up!

In short, I'm totally bagging on the Western diet.

I have just finished the chapter on seasonal fruit in which she shares a delicious plum clafoutis recipe with us (insert foodgasm) and she mentions early on that there is an entire chapter dedicated to bread and another to chocolate. Any author who promotes such delicious foods gets ALL the thumbs up!

Ivonne Rovira says

I'm pretty heavy, and I've tried a lot of diets -- and failed miserably. Giving up potatoes for life, constantly counting calories or points or carbs, fasting alternatively -- none of those diets worked for me. However, Mireille Guiliano has really inspired me! Gradually, cutting down on what she calls "offenders" -- sweets, bread, hard alcohol -- doesn't seem like a hardship when you know that these favorites aren't banished altogether, just reduced to a moderate amount. Rationally, I knew I needed more fruits and vegetables, but Guiliano comes up with some nice and easy recipes right in this book. I really feel excited to be beginning to live like la femmes Frances!

Next step? Getting the French Women Don't Get Fat Cookbook. It might take months to get down to the perfect French weight; however, under Guiliano's tutelage, getting there will be an adventure, not torture.

Carmen says

Making choices that are meaningful to you is the essence of the French woman's secret.

Rating and reviewing this is going to be very difficult.

Let's first establish that diet books are anathema to me. Dieting is the anti-Carmen. And make no mistake about it, this IS a diet book.

Let's break this down.

THE BAD:

- Advising people to track their eating for three weeks and then have 48 hours where they eat nothing but leek soup (ingredients: leeks, water) and water is a great way to jumpstart an eating disorder. I know this isn't what Guiliano intends, but it is the truth nonetheless.

- Guiliano basically became 'fat' (20 pounds overweight) by going to America. There, she ate brownies, bagels, and chocolate chip cookies.

For in America, I had gotten into some habits: eating standing up, not making my own food, living off whatever...

She begins fearing and dreading going back home because she knows her family and friends will react badly. And indeed they do, her asshole father insulting her literally as soon as he sees her.

As I approached, now a little hesitantly, he just stared at me, and as we came near, after a few seconds that seemed endless, there in front of my brother and my American shipmate, all he could manage to say to his cherished little girl come home, was, "Tu ressembles à un sac de patates" ("You look like a sack of potatoes").

It's so hard when you realize that some - if not all - of your worth as a human being is based on being thin. And not just in society's eyes, but in your family's eyes. As a child you honestly believe that your parents love you unconditionally - no matter what - but becoming chubby or fat quickly disabuses you of this notion. I don't know about France - Guiliano claims none of her French female-friends had any weight gain - but in America this often happens when someone comes home from college.

At age 19, I could not have imagined anything more hurtful, and to this day the sting has not been topped. But my father was not being mean... The devastating welcome sprang more than anything from his having been caught off guard. Still, it was more than I could take. I was at once sad, furious, vexed, and helpless. At the time, I could not even measure the impact.

She claims here that her father is not being a jerk. I disagree. The idea that she has to lose weight in order to

fit in and be accepted by her family again is true and absolutely realistic, but it also makes me want to weep. She knows if she stays chubby or overweight or fat she will be a disappointment and an embarrassment to her family who will at best look on her with pity and at worst despise her and be disgusted by her.

Her mom's solution is to call the family doctor in to make a housecall, and he puts her on the diet that she explains in this book.

She not only does follow the diet and lose weight, but she doesn't get an eating disorder as a result of this, and many, many females (and males) do. She's lucky. Many people fall into anorexia nervosa by beginning this way. No matter how much good is in this book - and there is a lot of good here - I cannot recommend this or any diet book due to the fact that I know too many people who have died from anorexia nervosa and many who are still practicing it and suffering from it.

I'd rather a person be fat, overweight or chubby any day than see someone who has a restrictive eating disorder.

Those aren't the only two choices, Carmen.

No, those aren't the only two choices, but once you've seen someone starve themselves to death you can't condone dieting. At least I can't. Especially since the majority of people I personally know and have known with restrictive EDs started with a diet.

She also makes me incredibly sad when she talks about a woman she worked with - whom Guiliano helps to lose weight in this book - who was a great, skilled employee but was devalued and could even lose her job because of what she weighed. And she wasn't more than 30 pounds overweight, imagine what would happen to a fat person. Would never be hired by this company, probably, regardless of their credentials. This is also realistic and true - but it baffles me that people just calmly accept this instead of flying into a rage at this bias of society's. Judging fat people simply for being fat and hating, despising, pitying them and denying them stuff like jobs etc. is not so much seen as 'discrimination' but simply "Oh, it's natural for people to hate fat people and feel disgust at them. And she should be healthy anyway! Being fat is not healthy. So it's okay to treat fat people like shit. Really, it's doing them a favor because it might motivate them to lose weight!" This baffles me. It should be obvious that people are judged on their character and abilities, not how much they weigh, but society accepts and embraces this attitude even today.

- Guiliano has a real sweet tooth. She stays 'fat' in France - not losing the weight right away - by eating a lot of pastries.

On the walk between school and the room I was renting in the Seventh Arrondissement, there were no fewer than sixteen pastry shops. Without my having much noticed, my meals were more and more revolving around pastry.

...

My Parisian pastry gluttony was wonderfully diverse. In the morning there was croissant or pain au chocolat or chouquette or tarte au sucre. Lunch was preceded by a stop at Poilâne, the famous breadmaker's shop, where I could not resist the pain aux raisins or tarte aux pommes or petits sablés. Next stop was at a café for the ubiquitous jambon-beurre and what remained of the Poilâne pastry with coffee.

...

Dinner always included and sometimes simply was an éclair, Paris Brest, religieuse, or mille-feuille, always some form of creamy, buttery, sweetness. Sometimes I would even stop off for a palmier for my goûter.

While I understand that Guiliano has a sweet tooth and worships chocolate (she even interrupts the book to explain the entire history of chocolate and how it is made), it seems she can't understand people who are heavy due to savory food choices. For instance, she describes a woman's interest in cheese and heavy sauces as 'weird.' And strange. And then she blames it on the woman's smoking. She also 'can't understand' why someone would want to eat something in a heavy sauce in summer. *blink blink* Well, it's because it tastes good. Not sure why these concepts are such a mystery to her.

To me, an interest in cheese and heavy sauces seems perfectly understandable.

She also acts like every woman has a deep interest, love, and passion for chocolate. Despite what commercials and marketing would have you believe, this is simply not true.

- Also, some of her ideas don't translate well to her intended audience. Which is American women.

By then you'll discover what is obvious to French women: There can be an almost ecstatic enjoyment in a single piece of fine dark chocolate that a dozen Snickers can never give you.

This 'nothing tastes as good as thin feels' thing is weird and also not exactly true. People who do this stuff - much like the 'deconstruction' of a Dorito as you find in Geneen Roth's books - and use it as an example of why people shouldn't overeat truly do not understand overeating.

Very few of us will go out just to buy a bag of salty nuts or potato chips.

Another sentence where I wonder where she is getting these ideas. People absolutely will do this.

- She throws in one sentence about class.

America... gastronomic class system unknown in France... The right and the opportunity to enjoy the earth's seasonal best seems to be monopolized by an elite.

But she never really addresses this or discusses it. She simply says that one must be okay with spending more money on food in order to be healthy.

She also spends a lot of time talking about shopping at outdoor markets, buying only two days worth of groceries at a time, drinking wine and especially Champagne (real) at every meal, cooking homecooked meals, and walking everywhere.

While I think a life like this sounds DELIGHTFUL and definitely all of these are good ideas(!) I don't think she realizes what a privilege it would be to be able to do all these things. A lot of people simply cannot afford to live like this and have no way to do so, and after working two or three jobs and raising four kids simply do not want to homecook or take a walk at the end of the day. Also, walking everywhere is great if you live in a city, but in the country and suburbs it's difficult if not impossible to get around without a car. Walking to work, as she suggests, just isn't a real option for most people.

And she hates the gym. Again, I think this is a cultural thing. I know the WHOLE POINT of the book is that culturally, the French have a lifestyle that is superior to ours and makes people thinner, but in America the gym - if you are blessed enough to be able to afford a gym membership, and that's a big if!!!!!! - is a necessity for a lot of people who are worried about weight gain. She thinks it is despicable and pretty much a waste of time.

As someone who had a nanny and a gardener and an orchard full of nut and fruit trees growing up, it seems to me that Guiliano isn't able to fully grasp what I consider the challenges of an 'average' American woman's life. If you are upper middle class or rich, sure. Lower middle class or poor and you are going to have trouble fulfilling Guiliano's suggestions.

Champagne never fails to set a mood. Its festivity is irrepressible. Having learned this, I decided right there that henceforth, I would either save up to have a party with Champagne or have no party at all.

This is the stuff I'm talking about. Real Champagne or no party?!?!? I would never have a party, then. I can't only host a party when I can afford Champagne for people!!! No concept of reality or of American life. Put some beer in a cooler and put a grill in the back yard. Duh. This lady is out of touch with reality. I don't know many people who can afford to buy Champagne for everyone!

- She suggests sharing your dessert or only having a few bites and letting the rest get thrown away by the waiter. Or eating fruit or cheese for dessert. I would get angry spending money on dessert only to let the majority of it get thrown away or watching other people eat it. And I don't really care about sweets, but for many people suggesting fruit or cheese instead of dessert would earn you weird looks.

THE GOOD:

The good is that Guiliano offers a lot of sensible and good advice that - if you can follow it - is wonderful. Not for weight loss, who gives a fuck about weight loss?!, but for better living. For instance, her 'drink champagne or wine every day' idea. Great! Expensive, can't afford to do it, but sounds fun. 'Buy your food at farmer's markets.' Great! Expensive, but great.

Here are some of her basic ideas:

- Teach your kids that veggies are yummy and to drink lots of water.
- Laughing is good for you.
- Sex and love are good for you.
- Practice good posture.
- Get enough sleep.
- Don't eat bread in restaurants before a meal.
- Drink lots of water.
- Eat homemade yogurt.
- Eat soup at least five times a week.
- Eat one big meal and two small meals a day.
- Don't eat farmed salmon.
- Eat mushrooms, Guiliano remembers picking them herself in the fields and forest. I always think of this as a Ukrainian habit, but I guess it is French as well.
- Eat prunes, drink lemon water, and eat fresh fruit.
- Grow your own herbs at home.
- Use spices, herbs and mustard.
- Eat food that is in season.

Guiliano is pretty approachable, has a pretty good attitude for someone who promotes dieting, and has a sense of humor. If you HAVE to read a diet book and you are going to read one, this is probably your best bet as far as normalcy goes. She doesn't advocate weighing yourself, skipping meals, cutting out a food group, counting calories, etc. etc. etc. It's more like 'eat less, move more.' I STILL DON'T ENDORSE THIS BOOK, but I hate diet books and I am against them. If you have to diet, this is probably the most mild.

THE UGLY:

- I covered this with the ED talk in **THE BAD** section, and the discussion of not only society's hatred of fat people, but your family and loved ones' basing your worth on your weight, AND when I discussed fat discrimination and how socially acceptable it still is.

Tl;dr - If you are going to pick a diet book, this is probably the best and most mild one. Notice I didn't say: the most effective, quickest and most weight-losing book ever. Tons of diet books are going to get you faster results and get you skinny more than this. But Guiliano isn't going for rapid weight loss. She only is focusing on women who are AT MOST 30 pounds overweight. Not any more than that. And she is less focused on the numbers of weight loss and more on making your life full of 'healthy' habits that she thinks are important and should be part of your basic everyday lifestyle.

However, are these changes realistic for the average American woman? Not all of them, and Guiliano doesn't seem to realize that. Also, I think this diet is perfect to kickstart an eating disorder, no different than any other diet in that regard. Guiliano made me want to weep with her matter-of-fact statements on how human beings' worth is based on their weight, regardless of their character and personality. Accurate, but a display of society's ugliness. Even though she seemed to just accept that all people need lose weight and be thin in order to have a happy and loving life, I do not. I do not accept this and I do not endorse this. I understand why she does - the story about her return from America is heartbreaking - but ideally I think this pressure shouldn't exist.

So the book is a mixed bag. On it's merits as a diet book it probably deserves a four if not a five. It's pretty reasonable and Guiliano is pretty sensible. However, I hate diet books. So you see the bind I'm in. Should I give it a one because it is a diet book? Should I give it a five for it's being head and shoulders above most diet books? A three because I can't sort out my feelings? o.O

I am going to give her a four because as a diet book this is as close to 'normal' as you are going to get. See my review of *The Kind Diet: A Simple Guide to Feeling Great, Losing Weight, and Saving the Planet* if you want to see me freak out. This is nothing compared to something like Silverstone's book. My urge to give Guiliano a 1-star stems from my hatred of dieting. So please keep this in mind: the 4-star is NOT an endorsement.

P.S. She does include a lot of recipes in here, they are pretty normal (no fake ingredients, no obvious fat or sugar bans). I didn't try to make any, I hope you forgive me. If I do, I will update this post.

P.P.S. She only translates about half the French she uses in this book. Expect to do a lot of Googling if you don't speak it!

Nat K says

- * Equilibrium is all
- * Quality over quantity
- * Fresh is best
- * Eat seasonally
- * Don't eat in front of the TV

- * Enjoy little pleasures daily, just don't overindulge (not too often anyway)
- * Water, water and more water (drink up!)
- * Champagne suits all occasions

"...a survey reveals that nine out of ten people admit to loving chocolate...and the tenth one is lying."

I was quite shocked when I saw that the print date of this book was 2005. Was it really that long ago that it was released? Time flies (and all that).

Mireille Guiliano has a lovely conversational tone. What she talks about is plain old common sense, told with a delightful Gallic charm. Sage advice.

Food is not the enemy. Dieting should not be a way of life. It tends to be the "all or nothing credo" that is the undoing of many.

This book has many vignettes about the Author's own "battles" with a sweet tooth, and is interspersed with many delicious (and simple) recipes.

There also musings on family, health, attitudes to life and ageing.

If you haven't already read this, it's worth a look. At least a sneaky peak on a lazy Sunday afternoon. If you have read it, it might be worthwhile reacquainting yourself with some healthful inspiration.

Bon appétit ? & salut ??

Valerie Sherman says

It's easy to feel defensive about the author's assault on the American lifestyle, and I think it's hard for some people to get over that aspect of the book. But, like it or not, the author is right about a lot of things:

- * France (and the rest of the Mediterranean) does not have a weight problem. America does.
- * Americans do not move enough, do not personally prepare their own food enough, and do not cook seasonally.
- * Americans are more concerned with getting cheap and convenient food than they are about truly enjoying and experiencing their food the way that Europeans do.

This is sort of the chick-lit version of "In Defense of Food," and I loved both authors' overall messages. I've also lost 30 lb. by making a lifestyle change similar to what the author outlines in "French Women Don't Get Fat," so I know that what she's saying is true. But to "get" the author's message, you have to get less defensive about the American way of life and get to really know (and love) your meat, bread, fruits, and vegetables.

Agatha Donkar says

All the advice she gives is spot-on (drink more water, eat smaller portions, eat more fruit) but Giuliano was so damn smug that I spent most of this book wanting to smack her, not wanting to listen to her advice. Alas.

Sarah says

I LOVED this book and the author's point of view on eating. Here it is in a nutshell:

-It's all about a balance between indulgence and self control.

-Don't buy "diet foods" like skim milk and fake butter. They aren't satisfying so you just end up eating more. Certainly avoid chemically-altered "nonfoods."

-Don't give up the things you love; do give up the things that you can live without. Never eat something just because it's there. If you put it in your mouth it should be for one of two reasons: you love it, or it's good for you (preferably both!).

-Don't eat without thinking about it. Make it an event. Meals should take place at the table and be served on beautiful dishes. There should be multiple courses, starting with a homemade soup and a simple salad.

-Drink more water- at minimum, a glass upon waking, a glass before each meal, a glass before bed. (I have been doing this for a couple of months now and I don't know how I ever lived without it. I actually crave it.) Also, serve water to your children. There is absolutely no reason to restrict babies to juice and milk. Help them develop a taste for it early.

-Walk to your destinations whenever possible. Take the stairs. Skip the gym. (I actually somewhat disagree with this one- I kind of like the gym. But additional walking is great too!)

Venessa says

Really the secret: eating sensibly. And this is not a diet book, more a lifestyle guide. Sensible things and sensible portions; I'd cut out the meat, being a vegetarian, but most of the recipes were absolutely delectable sounding, especially the pastries. Start with a three week inventory of everything you eat: Giuliano insists that you'll notice your offenders and be ready for a change before the time is up. Follow that with a weekend of nothing but magical leek soup, which will drain the water from you and any loss for a bulging woman is reassuring, so don't think about it being mostly water leaving your body after this cleanse. In three months time you will start to take shape and will actually want to keep with your lifestyle changes, since these aren't fad driven. Keep your offenders out of the house, start eliminating things you absolutely don't need, cut your bread intake from 10 slices a day to 2, eat two servings a day at least of real yogurt and water water water; which everyone knows, so why is it so hard to drink? But most important, don't regard your indulgences as sins, and please, have indulgences!
