

Discussion Questions for *Twinkie, Deconstructed* by Steve Ettlenger
(Some questions from Penguin Group USA)

1. How does the book relate to the well-worn quote, "You are what you eat?" Is it important to know details about the sources of our food? Why?
2. Were you surprised by the raw sources of common ingredients? What was the most surprising process or ingredient to you?
3. Many common ingredients are made from petroleum. How do you feel about that?
4. Do you think food ingredient manufacturers should be more open about their processes? Should we know more about nutrition and agriculture and the food distribution business?
5. If food is central to all cultures, what does processed food such as snack cakes say about our culture?
6. How much do you think Ettlenger worked with and/or was influenced by Public Relations officers in his research? How much corporate cooperation was necessary for Ettlenger's kind of research as he visited factories?
7. Should Ettlenger have taken a strong stand for or against processed food? Where do you think he's coming from? Should it matter?
8. Do you think Ettlenger's tone is funny or inappropriate given the subject? Would you have preferred more or less of the author's presence and attitude?
9. Should Ettlenger have included more or less science (formulas, equations, flow-charts, etc.) in the text?
10. Are there any additional comments you would like to share?

(The most interesting comment for me came on p. 258: "The industrial aspect of our food - and Twinkies are but one among tens of thousands of processed foods - would be less troubling if it were easier to still see where it all comes from. There is often no terroir to an ingredient, no one place that it is actually *from*.")