

## (2) Home - Quora

Ahh... A beautiful day on the streets of one of the most prestigious and famous cities in the world: New York!



Take a walk with me and let's see all the new sights, experience all the new smells, sounds, and tastes. Let's eat at the Rainbow Room! This is one of the fanciest restaurants there is!



Everything on the menu looks pretty good:

## COCKTAIL HOUR

### PASSED HORS D'OEUVRES

Parmesan Profiteroles with Herbed Goat Cheese  
 Cones with Avocado Mousse, Red Radish & Pickled Cucumber  
 Miniature Spicy Tuna Tacos  
 Salmon Tartare Cones with Crème Fraîche & Caviar

Tomato Tart with Black Olives, Goat Cheese & Basil  
 Petite Maryland Crab Cake with Rémooulade Sauce  
 Moroccan Lamb with Cucumber Raita & Feta on a Papadam Crisp  
 Beef Wellington Bites with Béarnaise

### RAW BAR

Clams & Oysters  
 Boiled Shrimp, Natural & Cajun Style  
 Crab Claws  
 Tuna Tartare & Salmon Tartare  
 Fluke Ceviche & Shrimp Ceviche  
*Complemented by Spicy Cocktail Sauce, Mignonette, Lemon & Traditional Accoutrement*

### LITTLE BURGERS STATION



I'll have the Parmesan profiteroles with herbed goat cheese. They are a delicious cream puffed éclair lightly toasted with fine oil and garnished with sweet dill.



We would never question if this meal is "healthy" or not. It's a prestigious, "fancy" restaurant, unlike McDonald's... Yet compare the nutrition information of these profiteroles to McDonald's fries:

	Serving size (g)	Calories	Fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Sugar (g)	Fiber (g)
Rainbow Room profiteroles	154	515	28	102	407	34	1
McDonald's® Fries	154	510	24	0	350	0	6

In a side-by-side comparison, profiteroles measure up to have more fat, sugar, and sodium than McDonald's fries.

In any case, this restaurant is very nice. They will make you almost anything else you want during the breakfast buffet:



You can get a custom-made omelette or a delicious fresh breakfast burrito:



However, beware... This burrito has 1950 calories, 128 grams of fat, 910 mg of cholesterol, 3640 mg of sodium, 114 g of carbs, and 16 g of sugar. Equivalent to eating six egg McMuffins from McDonald's! Hard to believe that something this fancy could be that high-calorie.

We are beginning to see the results of the McDonald's effect at play here:

The McDonald's effect is a cognitive bias in which consumers are more likely to believe that items which are more rare, more expensive, and/or harder to attain are more valuable in ways which appeal to them, i.e. healthier, taste better, more productive, more beautiful, etc.

McDonald's, as one of the most common, well-known, and cheap retailers of food in the world, constantly meets with criticism and much backlash as to their products and procedures. Hence the name, the "McDonald's effect".

In reality, the price, time of production, and quantity do not actually play a role on quality of food. For example, many consumers are more likely to believe that food from a cheap, common burger restaurant *like* McDonald's is less healthy compared to an otherwise more expensive, rare restaurant.



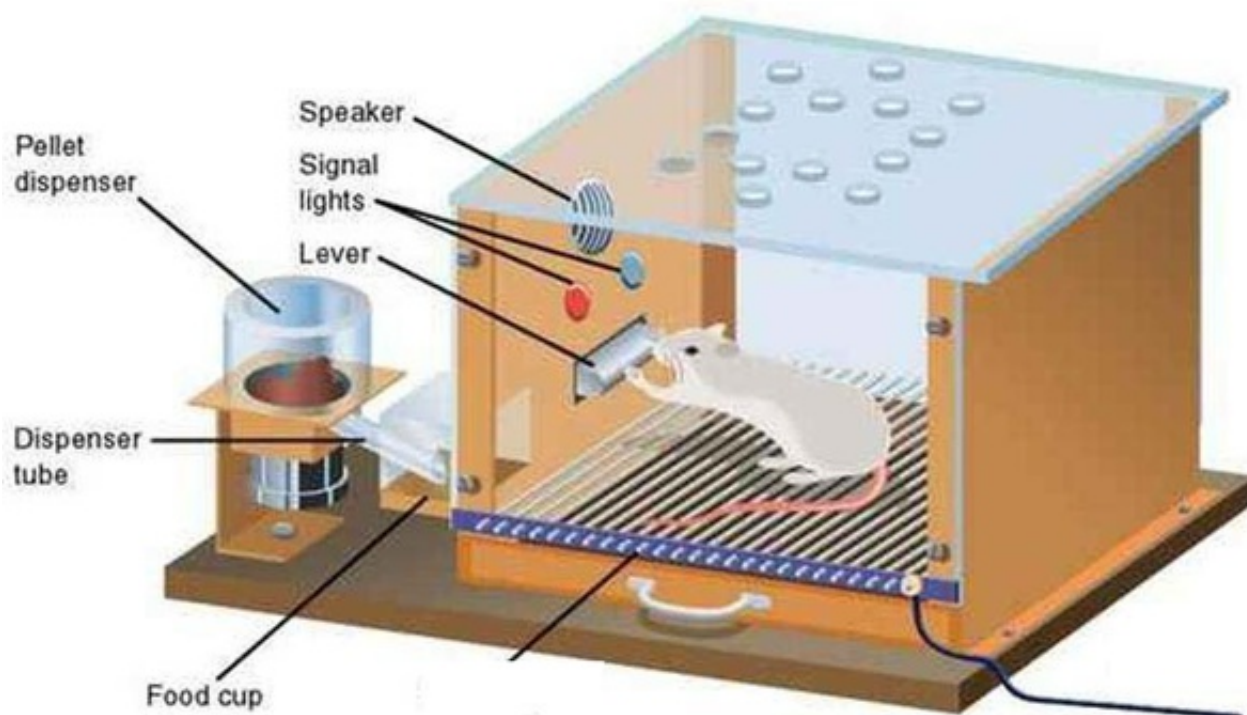
One common belief caused by the McDonald's effect is that foods which are less commonly eaten, which are harder to find, or which are harder to prepare, are somehow more "healthy" than more common foods.

	Serving size (g)	Calories	Fat (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Sugar (g)
McDonald's Fries	154	510	24	0	350	0
Sweet Potato Fries	154	540	32	10	1,122	36
Mashed Potatoes	154	630	35	112	1,148	3

However, many comparisons between similar substitutions of foods show that this is not the case, as in the comparison between McDonald's fries, sweet potato fries, and mashed potatoes above.

The McDonald's effect is related to the IKEA effect in the sense that some of the food produced today requires little to no preparation by the individual buyer. A pizza can be bought from the store easily in today's world, and a consumer can enjoy it quicker and more easily than if a consumer were to buy and put together all the ingredients oneself. A consumer may conclude that because he/she is *working* to produce the pizza, the pizza tastes better, or is healthier. All the ingredients are the same, but the consumer may *believe* that the additional work they do to produce it makes it better.

The phenomenon which involves perceived greater reward for greater effort has been observed in mice, pigeons, and even humans in experimental procedures. In one experiment, mice were given food from two different dispensers. One dispenser required one tap of a lever to dispense a food pellet, the other dispenser required 20 taps to dispense a food pellet.



Surprisingly, the mice *preferred* to eat from the dispenser which required 20 taps! It was the exact same food pellets, but the mice seemed to have formed a belief that they needed to get their food from a source which seemed more natural, i.e. a food source which requires more work.

Organic food is another area where the McDonald's effect plays a role. Organic food is less frequently sold, more expensive, and harder to produce, giving the illusion that it is better. However, modern innovations in the growth and quality of food have undoubtedly done more good than harm. In fact, in this NCBI study, children drinking organic apple juice tested higher for toxins such as patulin than children who drank non-organic apple juice: [Occurrence of patulin in organic and conventional apple-based food marketed in Catalonia and exposure assessment.](#)

The McDonald's effect can play a role on other rare products, such as diamonds, gold, limited edition toys, art pieces, or cars. People are more

likely to believe something is valuable just because it is rare. This is the Bugatti Veyron Pur Sang, only five-models of it were ever made. It's made with ultra-light carbon fiber, making it an extremely expensive but very well made car:



Is there any real reason they could only make five of them? If someone was willing to pay for a sixth, I'm sure it would be worth the while, but because rarer items appear more attractive, the car sells better as a limited-edition item.

We are all subject to the McDonald's effect in one way or another. Maybe it's those hyped-up air Jordans that come out in a few weeks, or one of those photos by Thomas Mangelsen, or maybe it's the Hope Diamond.





The McDonald's effect mostly applies to food because it's the one thing that everyone needs. Perhaps it is natural human instinct to ignore food if it's too easy; ancestral humans who ignored bugs and worms as a food source and went for mammoth meat were probably much healthier than the average caveman, and they passed on their genes to the current populace today, creating the same belief system in us now.

The only thing that's different today is how much great food can be produced, and how it can be made so cheap! We take for granted how high tech phones, satellites, and cars are. It's incredible how you can have a conversation with someone 300 miles away in just a few minutes. Communication is extremely high-tech in today's world, and sometimes, we

forget how high-tech *food* is as well. Food is an EXTREMELY advanced technology that most people don't even think about when that soft, blueberry chocolate bar melts in their mouth.

Every oil, every emulsifier, and every single molecule added to that chocolate bar was specifically chosen and engineered to make it so that it's physical melting point is actually at the temperature your mouth is at! It took thousands of hours to perfect that chocolate bar, crafted by skilled chemists and chemical engineers, and they made sure that every natural plant toxin was cooked out. That is the reality of food technology in our world today. Food is still healthy, even though it's mass produced. It doesn't matter if the food is prepared by human hands or by a machine, it won't change the actual content of the food.

It is commonplace to go against the norm. Billion-dollar industries are very prone to the formation of conspiracy theories and of course will receive widespread, public complaints. No one does anything perfectly.

The bottom line is that even if you're not eating at the fanciest restaurant in the world this holiday season, you don't have to feel bad! You may like to think that the Rainbow Room uses "better" eggs than McDonald's does, or that their sunchoke velouté is one of a kind, but honestly, it all just comes from one giant chicken farm held to the appropriate legal standards. Every food you buy has been optimized for your personal enjoyment, and the technology is growing; it's only going to get better from here!

Rainbow Room menus: [Rainbow Room - Iconic NYC Landmark - Dining & Entertainment](#)

McDonald's menu: [McDonald's Nutrition Calculator | McDonald's](#)

Preference for rewards that follow greater effort and greater delay:  
<http://www.uky.edu/~zentall/pdfs...>