



food and people

## Food and our way of life: Can we learn to enjoy eating more healthfully?

This is the fifth in a series of 15 articles exploring "Food and People." In this article, Johann Dwyer, a nutritionist at the Tufts University Medical School, discusses how we can eat more healthfully and enjoy it. This series was written for Courses by Newspaper, a program of University Extension, University of California, San Diego, with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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By Johann Dwyer  
special writer

Americans have long prided themselves on their high standard of living. Many of us assume that our affluence has brought us better food and better health than almost anywhere in the world.

It therefore comes as a shock to realize that some other countries may be enjoying better health than we are.

For example, despite recent advances in curative medicine, American death rates from coronary heart disease are still five times those of Japan, triple those of France, twice those of Italy, and a good deal higher than rates in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Belgium.

We are also fatter than many of our peers in other industrialized countries, and our overall life expectancy is lower than in several other nations.

The explanation for these differences in health does not lie solely in our genes. Rather, the environment of abundance in which we live fosters habits that do violence to our health. Our American way of life, with all its advantages, also provides us with maximum temptations and low-cost opportunities to eat, drink and smoke too much, while we lead increasingly sedentary lives.

Our life style encourages us not only to eat too much, but also to eat the wrong kinds of foods for our health. For example, we spend nearly one-

fourth of our food dollars on meals and snacks away from home, especially at fast-food restaurants, which frequently feature foods high in calories. And nearly one-half of the money we spend for meals at home goes for convenience and processed foods, which are often high in fat, sugar and salt.

### IMPROVING OUR HEALTH

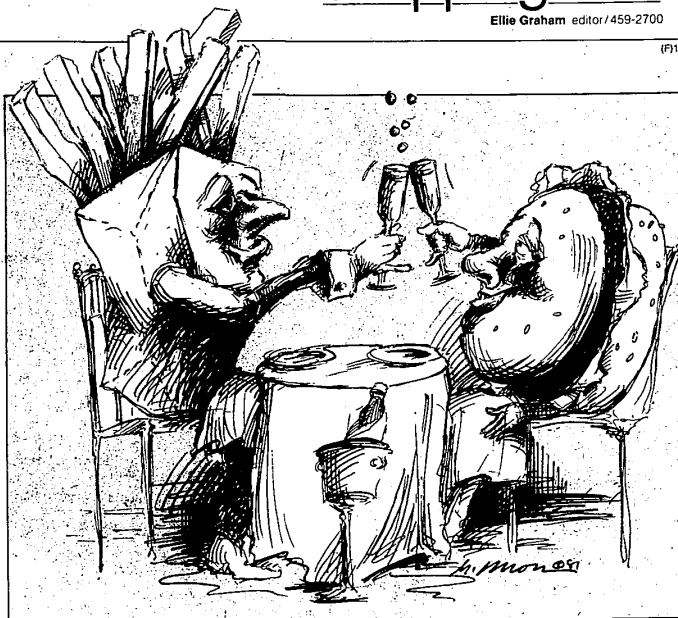
Fortunately, we are in a position to improve our health without radically changing our lifestyles. New findings from a major study of heart disease prevention conducted at Stanford University show that modest changes in how we eat, drink, smoke and exercise, which are very much in line with most of the ways we like to live, can reduce and are reducing coronary artery disease.

Those who have succumbed to unhealthy eating habits are not necessarily unwilling to change their diets. Rather, they find it difficult to choose wisely from our abundant food supply. Our supermarkets, for instance, contain many thousands of items. Little wonder consumers are confused. Furthermore, when they do decide to change their diets, they often listen to the wrong advice.

Too often it is fad diets, promoted by extremists in the nutrition profession as well as by self-styled experts, that capture media attention precisely because they are so outlandish and demand such unnecessary sacrifices. Fad diets play on the misconception that healthy diets, like strong medicines, must be unpleasant to be successful. Most also cater to our desires for quick fixes to long-term problems.

In actuality, some fad diets are dangerous because they lack essential vitamins, minerals and other nutrients; most don't work; and all are inconvenient — good reasons for avoiding them. Moreover, fad diets fail to change our long-term eating habits for the better.

In contrast, the real experts recommend rather simple and far less sensational steps for improving



our health. They call for gradual changes rather than a headlong rush into a new way of eating, and they emphasize enjoyment rather than a lifetime of pleasure prohibition.

The four principles of enjoyment, variety, balance and moderation are all that are really necessary for eating the healthy way.

### A VARIETY OF FOODS

Eating a variety of foods assures an adequate supply of all the necessary nutrients. Each of the major food groups is a particularly good source of certain nutrients and should be included in the diet. Bread, cereals and grains, for instance, are good sources of starch, most of the B vitamins and iron. Fruits, especially citrus fruits, provide Vitamin C.

Dark green vegetables supply vitamins A, C, B-2, folic acid, iron and magnesium, while starchy vegetables and beans also provide protein and vitamins B-1 and B-6. Milk products and cheese are essential sources of calcium and of several vitamins, including vitamin D. Meat, poultry, fish and eggs provide protein, phosphorus, iron and B vitamins. Unless prescribed by a doctor, vitamin and mineral supplements are unnecessary.

Thanks to American abundance, food technology

and marketing, it is possible to obtain a broad variety of foods throughout the country.

### BALANCE

Balance is important to assure adequate amounts of starch and fiber in the diet. Whole grain breads and cereals, vegetables and fruits are high in one or both of these constituents, and many are also low in calories.

The proper balance of nutrients is also important for maintaining desirable weight. Cutting back on calories from the energy rich foods — fats and oils, sugars and sweets, and alcohol — is the easiest way to control weight.

Of course, eating smaller portions of other high-calorie foods and increasing physical activity also help maintain weight. Because most of us expend little physical energy at work, it is important to increase everyday physical activities such as walking and climbing stairs, as well as to include vigorous activities we enjoy — tennis, biking, running, swimming — in our regular routines.

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# Down with winter doldrums . . . Celebrate!

Holiday parties are over and a long winter looms ahead, but it's also the start of an exciting, brand-new year. So plan to make the most of it by creating your own special occasion for entertaining. Cheer up friends with a dinner sure to chase away mid-winter blues! This menu for eight, planned around colorful, fun-to-eat kabobs, proves it's possible to put on a festive spread without blowing the budget.

The inviting, hickory-smoke aroma of Glazed Sizzlean Kabobs coming from the kitchen is sure to arouse weary appetites. Unlike bacon, real meat Sizzlean stays flat as it cooks — so the pure pork strips are ideal for lacing on skewers. Since Sizzlean is 50 percent leaner than bacon, there's more meat to eat and

fewer drippings left in the pan.

The kabobs are served on a bed of corn bread stuffing. Conveniently packaged corn bread stuffing mix is blended with a combination of sautéed fresh vegetables and chopped pecans to make a delicious, attractive side dish.

Cheese and garlic croquettes enliven an already interesting salad combination, adding crunchiness and tangy flavor.

Chocolate filled coronets crown the meal. The elegant pastry shells are easily made using frozen puff pastry sheets that can be thawed, unfolded and ready to shape in just minutes. All the time-consuming work of making pastry "from scratch" is eliminated, yet results are equally light, flaky and delicate.

The luscious, creamy filling is made with unsweetened cocoa, chocolate in its most concentrated form, so flavor will be extra rich. Since cocoa is ready to use — there are no squares to pre-melt — and combines smoothly with other ingredients, you'll blend up the delectable chocolate glaze in a very few minutes.

Serve Perked Mocha Cocoa for a heartwarming grand finale. This delicious hot drink makes a tempting change of pace, even for confirmed coffee lovers. And remember, when you use cocoa, you also save money: 4-1 2 ounces of cocoa plus 8 tablespoons of shortening goes as far as 8 ounces (or squares) of baking chocolate — for about 2 3 the cost.

## GLAZED SIZZLEAN KABOBS

Yield: Approximately 16 kabobs  
(8 servings)

**Kabobs:**  
2 packages (12 ounces each)  
Sizzlean\*  
Carrots, pared and cut into  
3/4 inch pieces  
Green pepper, cut into  
1 inch squares

Broil Sizzlean 4 inches from heat source about 2 minutes on each side. Drain on paper towels.

Meanwhile, cook carrots and green pepper in boiling salted water until just tender crisp. Drain.

Combine glaze ingredients in small bowl; mix well.

On long skewers thread Sizzlean with alternating carrots and green pepper. Allow 2 strips Sizzlean, 4 pieces carrot and 2 pieces green pepper per skewer. Brush one side with glaze. Broil glazed side up for 2 minutes. Turn and brush second side with glaze. Broil 2 minutes or until Sizzlean is done.

\*Generic term for Sizzlean: pork breakfast strips

## VEGETARIAN STUFFING

1-1/2 cups broccoli florets  
1 cup sliced mushrooms  
1 cup sliced zucchini  
1 medium clove garlic, minced  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine  
1 package (8 ounces)  
1 cup chopped spinach  
1/2 cup sliced green onion  
1/2 cup chopped toasted pecans  
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger  
1-1/2 cups water

\*Corn Bread Stuffing

In a large saucepan, cook broccoli, mushrooms, zucchini and garlic in butter until vegetables are tender. Add remaining ingredients; blend well. Spoon into buttered 2 quart baking dish. Cover and bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Makes about 7 cups.

NOTE: If a more moist stuffing is desired, increase water to 2 cups.

## OLIVE AND ANCHOVY VEGETAL SALAD

6 cups assorted salad greens  
cut in bite-size pieces  
2 medium tomatoes,  
cut in wedges  
1 cup sliced cucumber  
1 green pepper, cut in rings  
1 red pepper, cut in rings  
1/2 cup pitted black olives  
1/2 cup pimiento stuffed olives  
1 can (2 ounces) flat  
anchovies, drained  
2/3 cup olive oil  
2 eggs  
3 tablespoons wine vinegar  
1 cup parsley  
1 small onion, cut in wedges  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
1-1/2 cups Cheese and Garlic  
CROUTONS

In a large bowl, combine vegetables, olives and anchovies. Cover and chill until ready to serve. To make dressing, combine next six ingredients in blender container and blend until smooth. Just before serving, add dressing and croutons to salad and toss.

Makes about 10 cups salad.

## PERKED MOCHA COCOA

2-1/2 cups cold water  
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa  
1/3 cup sugar  
3 tablespoons ground coffee  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1-1/3 cups milk  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Reserve 1 cup water; pour remaining water into percolator. Thoroughly combine cocoa, sugar, coffee and salt in small bowl; pour into percolator basket. Assemble percolator; pour reserved water over cocoa mixture in basket. Stir until all water passes through; plug in percolator. Allow to perk completely and finish dripping.

Meanwhile, heat milk in small saucepan over medium heat; stir in vanilla. Pour 1-3 cup warm milk into each serving mug; fill with mocha cocoa. If desired, garnish each mug with a dollop of whipped topping and a light sprinkling of cocoa. Yield: Four 8-ounce servings.

## CHOCOLATE-FILLED CORONETS

2 sheets (17-1/4-ounce  
package) Frozen Puff  
Pastry  
3/4 cup butter  
1/2 cup Cocoa  
3 eggs, separated  
1 4 cup sugar  
1 4 cup heavy cream  
1 2 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
Chocolate Glaze  
(Recipe below)

Cut eight 10 x 10-inch squares of heavy duty aluminum foil. Fold in half diagonally. Roll into cone shape 6-inches long and 1-1 2-inches in diameter.

Thaw pastry according to package directions. Unfold and cut each into eight lengthwise strips. Brush with water; wrap around foil cone, overlapping strips by 1/8-inch using 2 strips for each cone. Bake at 400° for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool; carefully remove foil. Prepare filling.

Melt butter in saucepan. Remove from heat; carefully blend in cocoa. Cool. Beat egg yolks in small mixer bowl; gradually add 1 4 cup sugar, beating until thick and lemon colored. Fold in chocolate mixture; stir in heavy cream; set aside.

Beat egg whites until frothy; gradually add 1 2 cup sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Fold chocolate mixture into stiffly beaten egg whites. Add vanilla; chill until almost firm. Fill shells. Glaze; chill until serving. Makes 8 coronets.

**CHOCOLATE GLAZE:** Combine 2 tablespoons melted butter, 3 tablespoons Hershey's Cocoa and 1 cup confectioners' sugar. Stir in 2 to 3 tablespoons water and 1 teaspoon vanilla.

**Variation — COCOA WHIPPED CREAM FILLING**

1/3 cup confectioners' sugar  
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine confectioners' sugar and cocoa in small mixer bowl. Blend in heavy cream and vanilla. Whip on high speed until stiff. About 2 cups filling.