



## taste buds chef Larry Jones

### Worth making a mess

Mention cooking with kids to any parent and immediately you conjure up thoughts of electric beaters spraying cabinets with cake batter and the need to haul up the Shop-Vac from the basement. Add to that at least two loads of messy clothes for the laundry and a minimum of 20 minutes in the tub to pray the food coloring will soak off the fingertips. Sounds like fun, eh?

It's no secret that kids learn most by being actively involved. Creating something beautiful and tasty with food is a rewarding experience for anyone between the ages of 3 and 93.

Have you ever experienced the feeling of pleasure when the cake you just prepared turns out perfectly? So what if it was a box mix. Imagine what little kids experience when they see wheat being ground into flour, make the dough, shape the loaf, smell the aroma while baking, hear the crackle of the crust and finally savor the flavor of the hot, homemade bread he or she had a hand in creating.

So much for Wonder.

Many children eat foods that come in boxes, packages, bags, bottles and vending machines that have been designed for eating on the run. Homemade food invites us to come and to savor. Misleading fast-food advertisements that glamorize eating in the car encourage children to adopt poor eating habits which can, in turn, undermine their health.

Forget the formulated, fabricated fake foods and spend a few hours with a child to show him how to plan the meal, shop, prepare, enjoy and don't forget the clean-up and re-organization. Let's face it, good food habits are not acquired naturally. They must be learned.

**BIG DEAL**, you say? Other than making a royal mess of the kitchen, who wants to chow down on overcooked, dry bread? What can a child learn through working with food?

First off, the child can learn an awareness of nutrition. Sure, it's easy to open a can, pop it in the pan, heat and stir. Try explaining what the different foods do to the body. Dairy products help bones grow; meat, fish and poultry are proteins that give us energy to play, and so on.

Ever Spaghetti-O's have certain properties that include high carbohydrates essential for growing bodies and vegetables for healthy skin.

In addition, the child can learn positive social and emotional development. Food comforts. Food nourishes. Food is an excellent source for human communication. I have friends who plan their day around what's for breakfast, where they're going to lunch and what's for dinner. A bad excessive, yes, but still a basic route for communicating.

Probably one of the most important skills a child can experience when cooking is concept. Squeeze the oranges, melt the butter, pop the corn, notice the bitter taste. Never underestimate the term "what if" or "what happens when?" Can you explain what turns a bowl of gooey cake batter into a light, flavorful and crumbly mound?

We can get even more technical and bring in the study of science when cooking. How does a green onion grow? What is an egg and why does (or doesn't) it hatch? Great for older kids to stimulate the thought pattern. Use that last question when it's time to begin the discussions about the birds and the bees. The situations are endless.

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Brad Baldner, 14 (left); Melinda Labrenz, 13; and Andrew Capp, 14, eighth graders at Derby Middle School in Birmingham, prepare a vegetarian pizza during a class session on healthy eating. The students also made cookies called Sweetie Wheelies. Both the pizza and cookies are low in fat.

DAN DEAN/staff photographer

## Kid stuff

### How to eat healthy can be learned early

By Gori Rinechler  
special writer

**E**IGHTH GRADE STUDENTS in Sharon Watson's health class at Derby Middle School in Birmingham have been studying nutrition and how to incorporate healthy eating into their lifestyle.

A few weeks ago, they invited Nancy Holden, administrator of Beaumont Hospital's Preventive and Nutritional Clinic, to present a class on healthy eating and cholesterol. "Our purpose in addressing the students is to help them become more conscious of low-fat eating patterns," Holden said. "Children and adolescents need to exercise more and reduce the amount of fat in their diet."

**IN THE CLASSROOM**, Holden uses instructional guides and charts that list the amount of sugar and fats in favorite snack foods, such as Twinkies, potato chips and microwave popcorn.

"Fat makes fat," Holden emphasized. "Snack foods such as Twinkies, potato chips and Ritz crackers are high in fat, often 50 percent fat. Only 20 to 25 percent of your total calories should be fat. Candy bars are one of the biggest offenders."

According to a nutritional data chart in Robert E. Kowalski's latest book, "Cholesterol and Children (A Parent's Guide to Giving Children a Future Free of Heart Disease)," a 1.59-ounce bag of M and M's contains 10 grams of fat; an ounce of potato chips, 9.1 grams of fat, and a 1 1/4-ounce bag of corn chips, 15.1 grams.

Kowalski agrees, in his book, that "20 percent fat is optimal for good health."

The data goes on to explain that prepared foods that are relatively low in calories are often high in fat and cholesterol. For example, one Stouffer's Lean Cuisine, Fillet of Fish Florentine, has only 240 calories but contains 9 grams of fat and 100 milligrams of cholesterol.

**WHILE HOLDEN** continued to explain the importance of reducing fat and increasing the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables in the students' daily diet, she organized ingredients for them to present a cooking demonstration on making vegetarian pizza, and whole wheat cookies called Sweetie Wheelies.

"Making pizza at home is fun and can be made quickly using whole wheat frozen bread dough — defrosted first, of

course," she said. "Eliminate the high fat toppings such as sausage and pepperoni and substitute green peppers and mushrooms, and top with part skim milk or a low-fat mozzarella cheese."

She also recommended using sliced zucchini as a meat substitute because it takes on many flavors resembling meat when used with other vegetables and spices.

For quick pizza sauce, the students mixed a 15-ounce can of Hunt's tomato sauce with two teaspoons of spaghetti sauce mix. While the pizza was baking, other students made a batch of Sweetie Wheelies.

Later the class sampled all the goodies and agreed that, although low in fat, it all tasted really good.

**SOME DAYS LATER**, the students commented on the value of what they've learned so far. Brad Baldner said, "It made me more aware of what we're eating. Some of it's really bad for you. I eat more salads now than I use to."

Andrew Capp agreed, saying "The class changed the way I look at cafeteria food. Luckily, there's a salad bar."

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## Beverly Hills Grill food is not for wimps

### Food portions ample

The new restaurant review column "Dishing It Out" begins today. Reviews will appear every other week on the front page of Taste.

Try as it might, the Beverly Hills Grill just cannot pass itself off as a speck of California that somehow came adrift and ended up moored on Southfield Road.

For sure, it has the California decor, complete with simple, almost Oriental furniture not off by touches of neon and a giant sunburst overhead light. But it lacks the essential ingredient of the real California restaurant — the dainty, art-deco-a-plenty servings. In other words, the Beverly Hills Grill doesn't serve wimp food.

The menu is primarily seafood, salads and fresh-fruit desserts. Big slabs of seafood. Luscious salads overflowing their plates. Desserts that are servings of instant calories.

Only the building itself is skimpy. The Beverly Hills Grill seats 70 people, a sliver of a place which, for 20 years or so, was a Palace. The mahogany bar seats about six — people come here to eat.

### dishing it out

Intrigue (how about scrambled eggs and trout?), the dinner entrees reveal the restaurant's basic bent.

The walnut-crusted whitefish indicates the level of effort the Beverly Hills Grill puts into its food. The fillet (the size of a 4-year-old's forearm) was gently topped with light, slightly tangy sauce.

The grilled salmon (a solid block of flaky-to-the-fork meat) featured a garlic sauce a bit light in the main spice — but that's the opinion of a person who believes in taking all possible precautions against vampires and in dousing everything in garlic.

The mixed greens salad had a bit too much dressing — an all-too-common excess.

Let us not forget the vegetables. Veggies may be a necessary evil if so, let's have them Beverly Hills Grill style. The green beans were crisp, with a little snap, like al dente penne. It's an indication of a restaurant's seriousness about food when it

refuses to make its vegetables.

The day's specialties always include appetizing appetizers — like roasted garlic which you spread on bread and eat with goat cheese and peppers. We loved the smoked salmon in a heavy cream sauce with bow-tie pasta and veggies.

**POPULAR LUNCH** dishes are the Caesar's salad with or without grilled yellow fin tuna served open face or the delicious, warm, tenderloin salad with balsamic vinaigrette.

A few words about the clientele. On a recent visit, in attendance were lovers (leto-a-tete, pals out for some upscale eats, tired old married couples trying to ignore the marital nag, families of four being treated by Dad. One of the Detroit area's best-known multimillionaire businessmen dined next to a family who couldn't keep their toddler in the high chair.

It was theater, in keeping with flair of the food.

"That's part of our aim, casual with quality food and service," said Bill Roberts, who owns the grill with his wife, Judy, and Bill Pickett.

"That's how people want to eat in the '90s."

Too bad it's not a hair cheaper. We'll live there.

**Details:** The Beverly Hills Grill, 31671 Southfield Road, north of 13 Mile Road, Beverly Hills. Phone: 642-2355. Hours: Breakfast, 7-11 a.m., weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays, Lunch: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Dinner, 5-11 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 5 p.m. to midnight Fridays-Saturdays, and 5-10 p.m. Sundays.

Prices: breakfast: \$1.75-\$7.55; lunch: \$4.95-\$7.95; dinner, \$7.95-\$17.95. Visa, MasterCard, American Express.

Value: Excellent food, worth every penny.



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Bill Roberts is co-owner of the 70-seat Beverly Hills Grill, which aims for a casual atmosphere combined with quality food and service.