

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1996

TASTE

B

HOME SENSE



LOIS THIELEKE

Brew a delicious, robust cuppa Joe

Coffee now comes flavored, acid-reduced, caffeine-reduced, sweetened and bottled. The flavored instant coffees are regular or sugar-free, a cross between milky sweet coffee and hot cocoa. These taste more like cocoa than coffee so for a real coffee drinker they aren't worth the trouble.

The acid-reduced variety will certainly help reduce heartburn, but the flavor is questionable. The sweetened bottled varieties have the same amount of calories as soft drinks.

Coffees make numerous flavors and flavor combinations, hot, cold and in between, are available to customers. Espresso, cappuccino, cafe latte or cafe au lait are all favorites and can be made to your liking.

Beans

The two most common coffee beans are robusta and arabica. Robusta is named for its plant's resistance to variable temperatures and plant diseases. The coffee it produces is low in flavor with a grassy taste, a harsh brew. It is used mainly in instant and cheaper brands of coffee. Arabica beans are used in the better brewed coffees. Since they range in flavor, many manufacturers use a combination of the two varieties.

Freshness is the key to a good cup of coffee. Old beans sitting around for a while will not make a good cup of coffee. If you are buying coffee beans, buy them at a store with a lot of turnover.

Coffee should be sealed in an airtight, dark container. Heat and light are the coffee bean's enemies. The refrigerator dries coffee beans out and ground coffee absorbs refrigerator odors very easily. In fact, some people use ground coffee as a refrigerator deodorizer.

If you aren't going to use the coffee beans within a couple of weeks, freeze them. However, when you freeze the coffee beans the oil that gives it the flavor will never quite be the same. If you have frozen the beans, let them come to room temperature before grinding. It is best to purchase coffee in amounts that can be used within a week after opening.

Almost all coffee beans start out "green" before they are aged. Some coffee beans are shipped green or unroasted so they can be roasted right in the store. The longer the beans have been roasted the darker and stronger flavored the coffee.

A very dark roast known as Italian or espresso roast makes a richly flavored Italian espresso. A dark roast is known as French or Viennese and is a full-bodied coffee. The light medium roast called American or city is the one used in most commercial blends. A pale roast produces an acidic flavor, while, over-roasted coffee beans makes a bitter, burnt, tarry flavor cup.

When buying coffee, find a blend you like and suited to the type of coffee maker you have. If you are grinding beans, grind fine enough for the water to circulate freely to extract the flavor. If the coffee is too coarse, water will pass through too quickly and be weak. Good coffee is a clear rich brown.

Caffeine

Caffeine in coffee is a controversy that doesn't or won't go away. For each five ounce cup of automatic drip brew will contain 137 mg. Of caffeine; percolated has 108 mg. Cappuccino has 100 mg., and instant 60 mg.

If you or your doctor is concerned about the amount of caffeine you consume, try to cut back slowly. Going cold turkey can be a little rough. You may suffer from headaches, fatigue, muscle pain, and a bad mood. Coffee prompts the stomach to secrete more gastric acid so, usually anyone suffering from ulcers or frequent acid indigestion should avoid all coffee including decaffeinated.

Coffee adds a rich and mellow flavor to stew, barbecue sauce and red-eye gravy. It's added to pumpkin-nickel bread for flavor and color, to spice up cakes and fruit cakes, mousses, custards, ice cream, pudding, frosting and other desserts. The best coffee is made from freshly roasted beans, but is enjoyed with good friends and conversation.

Lois M. Thieleke of Birmingham is an Extension Home Economist for the Michigan State University Extension - Oakland County. For answers to food and nutrition questions, call (810) 858-0904.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Easy "Oat-ful" ways to start the day

MY MOTTO FOR LOSING WEIGHT

'Slow But Sure'



Coach: Richard Simmons is helping Sandra Dalka-Prysky reach her weight-loss goal.

This is the year the fat goes forever



STAFF PHOTO BY STEVE CANTRELL

Working out: This photo was taken a year ago at the Beverly Hills Racquet and Health Club.

Tips for a healthy '97

Here are some tips for being successful and staying motivated to reach your weight-loss and fitness goals for 1997.

- Think "one day at a time - one meal at a time - one pound at a time." Go slow and sure, but go for it!
- Treat yourself to "good" foods. Pay a little extra for a juicy apple (just make sure it's small or medium in size), an exotic fruit, all-white albacore tuna, maybe even lobster.
- Drink at least eight glasses of water every day.
- Plan what you are going to eat. You can put a lot of calories and fat in your mouth if you don't follow a good food plan.
- Always keep good "filler" foods, such as vegetable soup and salad fixings, in your refrigerator. Reach for these when you need a snack.
- Exercise daily, even if it's only marching in front of the television for 30 minutes.
- Get a "diet buddy." You may not have Richard Simmons, but a good friend or family member can help you over the rough spots, and keep you on track.

Editor's note: Sandra Dalka-Prysky, 52 of Beverly Hills, weighed more than 300 pounds in 1994. She wanted to cut her weight in half, and wrote to "Family Circle Magazine" asking for help. "Family Circle" responded by providing Sandy with the services of a nutritionist, Muriel Wagner, Ph.D. of Southfield. After seeing an article about Sandy in "Family Circle," the Beverly Hills Racquet Club offered the use of its fitness center, and a personal trainer, "Family Circle" recently introduced Sandy to Richard Simmons, the nation's top diet motivator. She has lost over 140 pounds.

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRYSKY
SPECIAL WRITER

New Year's Day. In the past, this first day of the new year was the time I, like millions of others, resolved to get fit and trim. "This year," I would fervently resolve, "is the year I am going to lose the fat forever!" But for years that never happened.

Then came January, 1994. For some reason or reasons - probably because walking, breathing, just enjoying life were a struggle and, probably, because I was approaching my 50th birthday - my resolve worked.

With the help of Muriel Wagner Ph.D., a registered dietitian and nutrition specialist who practices in Southfield, I started on a 1,800-calorie low-fat, high carbohydrate food plan. In addition, I began an exercise program of aerobics and toning.

I soon learned the joy and good feeling that come with exercise. Who would have thought that "such a big woman" could benefit from working out? I was so excited that Beverly Hills Racquet and Health Club encouraged me to form a fitness support group - WOWS (Work Out With Sandra) - for overweight women.

With a motto of "slow, but sure," the weight began to come down. A year later, the scales registered a 60-pound weight loss. Two years later, another 20 pounds. Then came a six-month standstill. The scales didn't budge.

With the standstill came decreasing motivation. "Family Circle" came up with a solution. It was time for the "top gun." Someone known far and wide for his successful "coaching" skills (not to mention his unique style of fun). Enter Richard Simmons!

I spent a few days with this energetic weight-

See SIMM, B2



Dietitian shares some secrets for 'Eating Younger'

BY KEELY WYGNONIK
STAFF WRITER

Muriel Wagner knows that people have an appetite for good food, but they don't always have time - or the know-how - to prepare it.

"I always had an interest in getting good nutrition information to people," said Wagner, the registered dietitian who counseled Sandra Dalka-Prysky. This fall, Wagner, a charter fellow of the American Dietetic Association who has practiced in Southfield since 1978, began sharing tips for "Eating Younger" in a quarterly newsletter.

"I try to make it like a visit to a dietitian's office," she said. "I try to pull together everything that they would talk to a dietitian about."

Wagner packs a lot into eight pages. There's a column titled, "Nutrition Savvy: Nutrition News That You Can Use." "Main Dish Miracles - Easygoing Mainstays with Flavor and Pizzazz," tips for "Sleuthing out the Secrets in the Supermarket," "Old Favorites Made Younger," "Sweet Splendors," and a "Kiddie Corner," featuring simple recipes you can make with kids.

"Just because recipes are healthful doesn't mean they can't taste wonderful. If I'm going to give you a recipe, I want to make sure it tastes good," she said. "I use a little butter and chocolate because I want recipes to taste good. It all has to do with portion size."

Wagner, a practicing dietitian for over 30 years, remembers the "fat old days," when the USDA "Wheel of Good Eating," which preceded the "Food Pyramid," listed two tablespoons of butter or fortified margarine as the minimum recommended fat intake.

Today's consumer is fat-wary, and label conscious. The USDA "Food Pyramid" suggests using fats and sweets sparingly - less is best.

"I came from a high-fat household and have empathy for my patients," said Wagner. "I exercise every day and don't suffer from diabetes or hypertension like my mother did. I believe what you put in your mouth and what you do with your body determines health outcome."

"Sandy lost over 80 pounds, but more important, her cholesterol level returned to normal," said Wagner. "She learned to eat breakfast, two other meals and snacks."

To subscribe to "Eating Younger," send a check or money order for \$13.50 to Eating Younger, P.O. Box 69021, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069. "Eating Younger" is published four times a year.

See more recipes inside.

LEAN BEEF STROGANOFF

- 1 1/2 pounds top round steak cut into 1 1/2-inch strips
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 3 ounces (about 1 cup) fresh sliced Portobello mushrooms
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1-2 garlic cloves minced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 cup low-sodium beef broth
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 cup non-fat sour cream

Pat steak strips dry. Sprinkle with pepper. Heat oil in nonstick frying pan. Cook meat slowly until brown on both sides.

Remove meat from pan. Add onions and garlic to pan. Cook until softened, but not brown. Add mushrooms. Cook until almost tender.

Return meat to pan. Combine beef broth, mustard, bay leaf, tomato paste, sugar and wine. Pour over meat mixture. Cover and simmer gently for 30 minutes or until meat is tender.

Remove bay leaf. Make a smooth paste of cornstarch and water. Add to meat mixture.

Cook over low heat until mixture thickens slightly. Add sour cream. Heat through, but do not boil. Serves 6.

* The stroganoff can be prepared up to the point of adding sour cream and then frozen for about a month. Serve with Barley Pilaf.

BARLEY PILAF

- 2 cans (12 ounces each) sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 1 cup quick cooking barley
- 3 cups beef bouillon (low sodium)
- 1/3 cup chopped flat parsley
- 2 tablespoons Fleischmann's Fat-Free Low Calorie Spread

Using bouillon instead of water, prepare barley according to package directions. Add remaining ingredients. Serves 6.

Yellow raisins, chopped green onions, or other cooked vegetables including carrots, peas or corn are additional options.

Nutrition per serving:	
• Calories:	300
• Total fat:	1.4g
• Saturated fat:	2.0g
• Cholesterol:	95mg
• Sodium:	200mg
• Diabetic exchanges:	4 lean meat; 1 bread

Nutrition per serving:	
• Calories:	131
• Total fat:	0g
• Saturated fat:	0g
• Cholesterol:	0mg
• Sodium:	71mg
• Diabetic exchanges:	2 bread