

## Try 'creative dieting' with bean soup gratinee

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Soybeans was the topic of the day for chef Franco Palumbo who visited Weight Watchers in Southfield recently, telling dieters "to be creative."

The executive chef of the international corporation served his audience a meal he described as "a deflation lunch—one that deflates the body while at the same time deflating the cost."

His own creativeness concocted "bean soup gratinee" using soybeans which can be purchased for 75 cents in a two-pound bag and the balance of the ingredients rounding out to 32 cents a serving. The soup was complemented with a salad and dessert.

Weight Watchers are renowned for sharing recipes members have created to get away from what Palumbo called the "diet food syndrome."

Diet foods are the cottage cheese-lettuce-canned peaches go-around which lacks variety and "pretty much suits the lazy fatties who are too bored with it all to start using herbs to spice things up a bit."

He advocates the "people foods" which are on-hand, easily accessible items mixed with a little creativeness because he does not believe the dieter should have to go to a lot of expense to lose weight.

In his test kitchen, Palumbo works to create recipes of food native to about 12 foreign countries where there are Weight Watcher branches, and about as many locales in the United States.

Palumbo is known as "the chef who lost his pot."

"I was one of you," he tells his audience. "There was a time when the only thing I had in my wardrobe that fit was my beads. I'd go to New York, see something I'd like and then find out there was nothing near it in a size 30 and 44 waist."

Palumbo has been dieting off and on since he was 10. In high school he was referred to as his football team's "double-tackle" and for years raced by store windows so that he wouldn't have to see his reflection in the glass. He had qualms about looking into full-length mirrors.

Since his introduction to Weight Watchers he estimates he has de-

veloped more than 1,000 recipes cooking up "a nutritious storm rather than a food orgy."

He says, "I always had confidence as a professional, but now I have confidence as a person."

Today, if the chef gets a yen for food he's constantly reminded of the "fat Frankie Palumbo."

Perched on his refrigerator, in full view, is a blow up of him at 265 pounds.

Weighing in these days at 195, he says, "I take one look and the refrigerator becomes much less important. I never want to forget."

Palumbo passes on his recipe for bean soup gratinee made with the high protein soybean:

### BEAN SOUP GRATINEE

- 3 packets instant beef broth and seasoning mix
- 3 packets instant chicken broth and seasoning mix
- 4 ounces finely chopped onion
- 4 ounces finely chopped carrots
- 1 cup finely chopped celery
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 3 medium canned tomatoes, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 whole peppercorns
- 1/4 teaspoon dried leaf thyme
- 6-8 cups water
- 12 ounces cooked dried soybeans
- 4 ounces grated Swiss cheese

In large non-stick skillet, sprinkle beef and chicken broth mixes over onions, carrots, celery and garlic; cook until vegetables are tender. Add remaining ingredients except cheese. Simmer, covered, 1-1/2 hours or until soybeans are very soft.

Puree 3/4 of soup mixture in blender; add to remaining soup. Evenly divide soup into four heatproof soup bowls. Sprinkle each with 1 ounce of grated cheese. Place in broiler; heat until cheese melts. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.



Franco Palumbo, executive chef of Weight Watchers International

## Cuisine and Duglass

### Bocci ball a favorite sport on island of Malta

My dad is a friendly sort of chap. He lives in Malta where he spends his leisure time in a cafe called the Premiere playing bocci.

This is a sport similar to horseshoes but played with a 25-pound lead ball. Bocci seems to entertain the Maltese when there is no soccer game being played in Valetta.

Perhaps you will visit the rock-sculptured limestone island, encompassed by a sea treasure of aqua jade water, continuously pumpered by a soft Mediterranean breeze while basking in the sunlit skies.

Knock on any door and ask for Harry Grech, a native islander, who will probably talk about the Maltese Cross, the Maltese dog, the famous Maltese lace, Kipling's short story about the Maltese cat and Dashiell Hammett's Maltese Falcon.

IF YOU'RE lucky, he may even suggest a malted milk. That's the American in the of 'boy. That's my dad.

An indelicate sobriquet of Malta's is the Navel of the Mediterranean, because it is at the center of the sea. Caves, tunnels and galleries riddle the island of shallow soil.

Farmers still use wooden plows to score the scanty earth. Taxi boats, called "dghajjas," sway the waves of the blue lagoon at Kemmana, while bathers bask in the ancient fortress.

Myth says that Malta was the northwest corner of the lost continent of Atlantis and that the three infernal rivers, Styx, Phlegeton and Acheron, all emptied there.

Calypso's cave was there on the smaller island, Gozo, not far away.



By  
DUGLASS  
DUGLASS

where Ulysses spent seven years in slavery.

The national drink is dark beer, and its best accompaniment is a well-devised dish. Aljotta, a vegetable broth flavored with red snapper and served with crisp sourdough bread. This recipe comes from Emma Lombardo, an American Maltese in Southfield.

**ALJOTTA**  
(Maltese Fish Stew)  
1 large onion chopped finely  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 large potato, peeled and cubed  
1-2 medium tomatoes sliced  
1 1/2 quarts water or fish broth  
1 teaspoon chopped parsley (fresh)  
10 fresh mint leaves or 1 tablespoon dried mint  
2 pounds whole red snapper  
Salt and pepper  
1 cup dark beer  
1 clove garlic

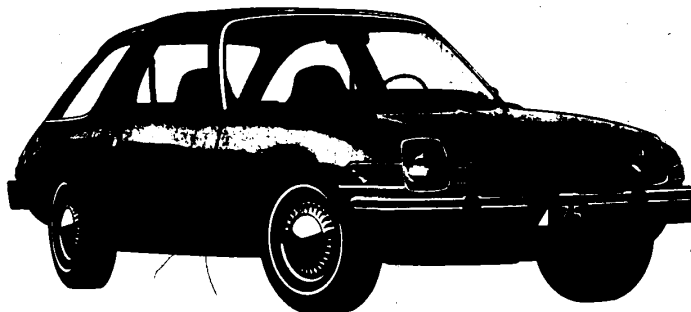
In a saute pot, add the olive oil, heat, then add the onions and potatoes. Sauté until slightly golden. Add the garlic and mint, combine

beer, water and fresh parsley. Simmer for about 15 minutes.

Add the red snapper (fresh) to the broth, salt and pepper and simmer for

30 minutes. Serve with lemon and croutons, garnished around the fish. Broth and vegetables over the fish.

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Red snapper goes into Aljotta, a Maltese fish stew

(Staff photo by Barbara McClellan)