

2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

## Make sure you get your 'five a day'

It's February, and I have noticed a barrage of what I normally refer to as our "New Year do-gooders." After a month of holiday indulgence, preceded by a year of not meeting our resolutions, many of us took an oath this year to change our lives.

After the clock struck midnight on Dec. 31, we were going to spend more quality time with our families, read more and care more. But what is normally on the top of most resolution cards is — this is the year to be healthy, radiant, eat better and start exercising. I see evidence that people are taking their New Year's resolutions seriously as I wait for exercise equipment at my local (normally not overly crowded) YMCA. Yep, we're all going to figure it out this year and be the picture of health.

Since the start of the New Year, the buzz in the 2 Unique office is everyone's diet — high protein, low protein, liquid, shake plan, so on and so forth. I am not a medical expert, I'm a chef with some nutritional background and constantly read about food and diet. I've been watching my weight vigorously since the age of 13. I come from a long line of dieters. My mom informed me at a young age that "it's in our genes," and said I'd always have to be careful about my weight. Over the past 20 years I've come to the conclusion that you've got to eat your veggies!

### Apple a day

The old "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" doesn't fall far from the tree of truth. My enthusiasm for this subject came last week after seeing my father (who is only 59) in the recovery room after his quadruple bypass surgery.

It is foolish for us to think we can continually live fast, play hard and eat a poor diet year after year and not have it take a toll. I am not trying to oversimplify, but a good rule of thumb to consider is food is the ticket! If you can't pronounce many of the ingredients listed on the label, be suspicious of purchasing it. Less is quite often more.

- What constitutes a fruit or vegetable serving:**
- 2 pieces of fruit such as an apple
  - 6 ounces fruit or vegetable juice
  - 1/2 cup raw vegetables
  - 1/2 cup mashed or chopped fruit or vegetables
  - 1/4 cup dried fruit

The National Research Council, and the National Cancer Institute, urge us all to "strive for five." This means getting at least five servings per day of fruits and vegetables. Many nutrition experts encourage us to shoot for nine to ten servings per day.

**Heart disease**  
Gladly Block a nutritional epidemiologist, who holds a doctorate, at UCLA at Berkeley, says, "this is a tall order as only 10 percent of Americans get even five." Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States. It affects approximately 7 million Americans annually and causes 1.5 million heart attacks and 500,000 deaths each year. Studies tell us our taxes and health premiums are going up to finance approximately 300,000 coronary artery bypass operations each year, at the cost of around \$30,000 each or \$9 billion annually. I'm surprised that we are not seeing billboards plastered with veggie slogans or luscious fruited centerfolds in our magazines. A healthy diet can literally make the difference between life and death.

Veggies and fruits are one of the most powerful tools we have for attaining radiant health.

Chef Kelli L. Lewton is owner of 2 Unique Caterers and Event Planners in Bloomfield Hills. A graduate of Schoolcraft College's Culinary Arts program, Kelli is a part-time instructor at the college. Look for her column in Taste on the second Sunday of the month. See recipes inside.

**LOOKING AHEAD**  
What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Recipe to Share

# SOUL FOOD

## GOOD FOR THE HEART AND SOUL!

By PEGGY MARTINELLI-EVERTS  
SPECIAL WRITER

February is Black History Month. First declared in 1976, it is a time to celebrate and learn about African-American heritage, culture and culinary traditions.

"Soul food" refers to both a method of food preparation and specific types of foods. The expression "soul food" is thought to have been derived from the cultural spirit and soul-satisfying flavors of African-American food. Gathering the family together for meals is an opportunity to nourish both the body and the soul.

My friend Cynthia told me about her family traditions. Cynthia's grandmother took pride in her ability to provide for her family and in her cooking talent. She was known for her homemade breads and cakes, freshly cooked greens and poultry, a variety to suit all tastes. Like my own grandmother, Cynthia's would "go out and get the chicken" and

butcher it at home.

While traditional African-American dishes like fried chicken, ham hocks and beans, grits, chitterlings, black-eyed peas and collard greens may nourish the soul and bring back fond memories of family gatherings, it's not the "soul" that is of concern, it's the "heart."

Occasionally, traditional food habits may conflict with nutritional needs. African-Americans in the United States are two to three times as likely to suffer from high blood pressure (hypertension) as whites. The disease affects African-Americans earlier and harder. Hypertension places African-Americans at risk for heart attack, stroke and kidney failure unless blood pressure is controlled.

There are some theories as to why African-Americans face such a high risk. The genetic factor, shows a tendency toward being "salt-conservers." Environmental factors include a salt-rich West-

ern diet. Evidence suggests that African-Americans don't necessarily eat more salt, their bodies are just better at conserving salt. Regardless of the complexity of factors, because African-Americans face such a high risk of this deadly condition, the recommendation to follow a low salt diet as a preventative strategy is effective. This recommendation is a good one for everyone, regardless of race or nationality, to help battle against heart disease.

Besides hypertension, according to the American Heart Association, the most dramatic nutrition related disparity between African-Americans and white Americans is the prevalence of obesity among African-Americans, especially women. It is interesting to note that African-American women have better body image perception and dramatically lower incidence of eating disorders. However, sometimes losing weight can help with blood pressure control.

Lorone Sprattling, a culinary instructor at Breithaupt Career & Technical Center in Detroit, and a chef at the Golden Mushroom Restaurant in Southfield, recalls large family gatherings where traditional "soul" food was proudly prepared and served.

Today he reduces the fat and sodium in these traditional dishes but keeps the flavor in tact. See his recipes inside.

Peggy Martinelli-Everts of Clarkston is a registered dietitian and director of clinical operations for HDS Services, a Farmington Hills based food service and hospitality management and consulting company, specializing in food-service management for hospitals, long-term care facilities, businesses, private clubs and private schools. HDS Services has approximately 200 management accounts throughout the United States and Japan. Look for Peggy's story on the second Sunday of the month in Taste.



### SOUL FOOD preparation

Soul food preparation techniques such as frying and barbecuing meat and the use of hot sauces and black pepper can be made more healthy by:

- **Fry frying** — in less fat and using poly or monounsaturated oils such as canola, sunflower or olive oil. Use vegetable oil cooking spray and sautes to insure foods cook thoroughly without sticking.
- **Homemade** — rather than store bought barbecue and hot sauces may be lower in sodium. Start with ingredients such as low sodium tomato paste.
- **Vegetables** — such as turnip, mustard and collard greens, sweet potatoes, snap peas, chowder peas and black-eyed peas are wonderful sources of vitamins A, C and potassium. Prepare them without salt pork and fats to keep the sodium and fat low. Try using lemon juice or even smoked turkey or chicken for flavoring.
- **Hominy grits and corn bread** — can also be prepared with less salt to supply another nutritious source of B vitamins.
- **Add more low fat milk, yogurt and low fat dairy foods** — for calcium and B vitamins. Even though African Americans face a lower risk of the bone-

thinning disease osteoporosis, getting enough dietary calcium is still important for overall good health.

- **Enjoy lean cuts** — of pork, poultry and fish cooked without added fats or oil.
- **To attain or maintain a reasonable body weight** — shoot for 13-15 calories per pound of body weight.
- **Keep dietary fat** — to about 30% of total daily calories or between 50-80 grams daily. Read food labels and choose lower fat foods most often.
- **Try to keep daily sodium intake** — to 2,400-3,000 milligrams. Take the salt shaker off the table and try not to salt foods during cooking. Use spice blends, either a homemade mixture or one from the grocery store.

**Resources**  
Glory Foods from Columbus, Ohio makes a new line of seasoned frozen and canned foods. For information, call (614) 252-2042. For a catalog of books, publications and educational resources for African Americans, visit [www.pomegranate.com](http://www.pomegranate.com)

## Lazy cook's Italian style bean soup will warm you up



MURIEL G. WAGNER

**MAIN DISH MIRACLE**  
I'm a full-winter person as long as it's not icy outside. The cold days of winter make me yearn for cuddle foods like homemade soup simmering on the stove.

But as you know, I'm a lazy cook, and an impatient one too. I use canned vegetables, broth and beans as long as they enhance and not detract from the flavor of the finished product.

Such a recipe is my version of a hearty bean soup that takes only 10 minutes to prepare, but tastes like it's been simmering on the stove for hours. I call it Eating Younger Quick Bean Soup Italian Style.

The basis for this soup is chicken stock, but as you might suspect, it's not one that I make from scratch. I find that an acceptable canned chicken broth, personalized with simple herbs and vegetables will turn it into a respectable soup base. The taste of Swanson Fat-Free Chicken Broth used in this recipe suggests that there was a chicken involved somewhere in contrast to other watery versions that I have tasted.

smoked sausage choice can be yours, although it should be reduced fat. The Hillshire Farms Brand is one of the leanest and best tasting. Regular sausage has 10 times the fat and saturated fat. When you're reading the sausage label, take note that the values are for a two ounce portion. These days it's a good idea to brown the sausage slices thoroughly.

If a vegetarian dish is your goal, you can omit the sausage. The soup will have enough flavor from the herbs and vegetables. The beans contribute enough protein to make it a stick-to-the-rib one dish meal.

Of course, the beans are ready cooked. Home prepared dried beans may be more flavorful and less expensive, but I'm willing to sacrifice some flavor and pay a little extra for the time saved and convenience. The same reasoning applies to the garlic. Besides, ready-chopped garlic is never sprouted when I'm about to use it.

The new tomato products are this busy cook's best friends unless fresh tomatoes are abundant and cheap. Canned tomatoes save much chopping and resolve seasoning questions. The one veggie that I use fresh is spinach. Wash it well (even the prewashed) and chop it coarsely after removing the stems.

Do us imported Parmesan cheese that is freshly grated. The difference in flavor between fresh Parmesan and the

boxed grated cheese makes the extra work time well spent. The nutrition and taste differences make nonfat cheese a poor trade-off in this case. One tablespoon of imported Parmesan adds little more than a gram of fat for its superior flavor.

This soup has lots of nutrients including vitamins A, B complex, C and K; soluble and insoluble fiber and antioxidants. The tomatoes are an excellent source of lycopene. The spinach is an excellent source of lutein and zeaxanthin that may protect your eyes.

For my fair weather friends, I soothe their winter woes with the soup and crusty French or Italian bread.

### EATING YOUNGER QUICK BEAN SOUP

- ITALIAN STYLE**
- 1 tablespoon olive or canola oil
  - 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
  - 1 (14 ounce) package Hillshire Farms Lean and Healthy Smoked Sausage, sliced
  - 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
  - 1 (16 ounce) package fresh spinach, washed and chopped coarsely
  - 2 (14 1/2 ounce) cans Swanson's Natural Goodness 100 percent Fat Free Chicken Broth
  - 1 (24 ounce) jar Great Northern Beans, drained and rinsed

- 1 (14.5 ounce) can Hunt's Diced Tomatoes with Italian Herbs
- 1 (15 ounce) can Hunt's Tomato Sauce — Chunky Garlic and Herbs
- 1 1/2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated

In a large saucepan heat oil. Add garlic, onion and sausage. Cook until sausage is well browned and onion is soft. Add remaining ingredients except Parmesan cheese. Stir to blend. Heat to serving temperature. Do not boil. Pour into bowls, distributing sausage and vegetables. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

**Nutrition Values (per serving)**  
Calories - 237  
Fat - 6.0g, Saturated Fat - 2.0g  
Cholesterol - 28mg, Sodium - 1,010mg  
Food Exchanges = 2 1/2 lean meats, 1 1/2 bread, 2 vegetables

Look for Main Dish Miracle on the second Sunday of the month in Taste. Muriel G. Wagner is a registered dietitian and nutrition therapist with an office in Southfield. She publishes "Eating Younger," a quarterly newsletter with recipes and nutrition tips. To subscribe, send a check for \$13.50 to "Eating Younger," P.O. Box 69021, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069.