

Battle of the Bulge

by Chef Brian Henry

The season of over indulgence has come and gone once again. For people like myself who believe that too much of everything is just enough this season can wreak havoc on our bodies. As the holiday season draws to a close marketing agencies are poised and ready to launch their annual New Year's assault on the Battle of the Bulge.

We are going to be battered with ad campaign's that will capitalize on our guilt for having too much fun over the holidays. New diet fads will be discovered as we criticize last year's diets for being unhealthy or ineffective for those who endured them. For those who succumb to this annual cyclic albeit North American behaviour: you may suffer from a much more dangerous affliction known as orthorexia nervosa. Simply put, a fixation on righteous eating in your quest for dietary purity.

As a chef on average I feed 50 people a day and in doing so I encountered the chaos of contradictory nutritional theories from a broad base of people. My culinary repertoire does not include any guaranteed diets or foods that one can prepare to spare us from the evils of enjoying good food. The best dietary advice I can give is simple; eat less and move more. Keep in mind that it's called junk food for a reason. The same reason we have the saying junk in the trunk.

Our physical health is closely related to our mental health and it is my personal belief that mental health should be our priority. If you choose a diet that socially isolates you or makes you feel that you are better than others or if you care more about the virtue of what you eat than the pleasure you receive from eating it you are in need of serious help. I would rather have pizza and beers with friends than eat sprouts alone.

Our society is the land of plenty. We have an obesity rate of 25% while the rest of the undeveloped world has fatality rate of 25% due to a lack of nutritious food. The choices are simple a menu or a life.

When making menu choices make smart ones. By eating smaller portions of a properly balanced diet you will find that the bathroom scales will tip in your favour. I'm a proud carnivore and personally choose a high protein diet with lots of rice. I often prioritize my meals around my choice of protein. This is not necessarily healthy but it is ingrained in my thinking. Often when writing a menu we start with the protein and build other components into the dish. Menus are not written to include such items as an eight-ounce Grade "A" carrot with your choice of a side of chicken tenderloins or a side steak. This often makes the vegetable component of meals a secondary consideration. This New Years resolute to building your menu in reverse. Decide what vegetables will be the focus of your meal, and build it up from there.



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