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Creating New Flavours in Western Cuisine with Fruit and Vegetables

While there is a common belief that fruit and vegetables are often served as side dishes in Western cuisine, their potential for versatility is usually underestimated. With a bit of creativity, fruit and vegetables can actually play a significantly different role – not only can they enhance the flavours of dishes, but they can also help people increase their consumption of this important food group without them even realising it. In this issue, Cheung Cheuk-hin (Anthony), a registered dietitian, shared some insights into the preparation of healthy Western cuisine.

Beetroots and Quinoa Salad

Diversified ingredients can offer customers a refreshing experience.

Preparing Refreshing Appetisers with Fresh Ingredients

Salads are commonly served as appetisers. In addition to lettuce and tomatoes, however, Anthony suggested restaurants use diversified ingredients, such as quinoa, beetroots and kale, to enrich the texture and flavour of the salad. Besides, restaurants could utilise natural ingredients, such as fruit and low-fat yoghurt, for making the sauces. This not only can make the salad healthier, but can also enhance the novelty of the dishes.



Easy-peasy to Add Vegetables to Main Dishes

Main dishes in Western cuisine are typically meat-based. To encourage customers to consume more fruit and vegetables, Anthony recommended restaurants incorporate healthy options such as whole grains, fruit and vegetables in place of fried foods and processed foods, which are commonly served, when designing their menus. Furthermore, regarding the recent introduction of cauliflower rice in many restaurants, Anthony believed that substituting some grains with cauliflower rice could be a beneficial option. Cauliflowers contain dietary fibre, which helps increase satiety and maintain gut health. As their starch content is insufficient, Anthony suggested restaurants mix them with grains to ensure a balanced diet.

At the same time, Western burgers have also garnered popularity among the public. Anthony pointed out, “Burgers are generally made with ingredients relatively high in fat and paired with high-fat salad dressings and butter, making them an unhealthy choice.” However, in recent years, many restaurants have introduced vegetarian burgers, which have become a favourite among customers. Anthony believed that replacing the patty with healthy ingredients such as fruit, vegetables, beans and mushrooms not only could reduce the burger’s saturated fat content, but could also increase customers’ intake of dietary fibre, making burgers a relatively healthier choice.

Grilled Fish with Vegetables and Quinoa

It is advisable to choose whole grains as side dishes more often in order to consume more nutrients, such as dietary fibre, minerals and vitamins.



Loving Nature Fortunate Coffee



A Taste of Happiness in Vegan Diet

Loving Nature Fortunate Coffee (hereinafter referred to as “LN”), is a three-star EatSmart Restaurant (ESR) that specialises in vegan cuisine. The LN team believes that the original tastes of natural ingredients not only can promote health, but can also evoke a sense of happiness among customers. Therefore, they have always been dedicated to promoting healthy eating.



Handmade Beetroot Steak Burger

Made with beetroot, the patty helps customers increase their vegetable and dietary fibre intake without them even realising it.



Making Good Use of Natural Ingredients to Create Healthier Dishes

The “All Day Breakfast” offered by the restaurant is exceptionally distinctive. It includes avocado with corn salad, tomato with quinoa, and baked potato wedges with herbs as wholesome substitutes for processed foods that are high in fat and sodium like bacon and sausages, lowering the overall saturated fat content. Moreover, the dish is served with homemade orange and passion fruit sauce as the dressing, offering a healthy and refreshing taste that makes it well received by office workers.

The restaurant introduces different types of handcrafted burgers every month. One of these rotating options is “Handmade Beetroot Steak Burger”, which is meticulously crafted alongside other options like “lotus root steak” and “tofu steak” by the team. The LN team expressed that the greatest challenge in creating “EatSmart Dishes” is brought by their dedication to healthy eating, “We believe dishes prepared with vegan ingredients can still be delicious and nutritious. Impressing non-vegetarians to a greater extent, they can help expand our customer base.” Therefore, the team kept making improvements during the process of developing “beetroot steak”. For instance, they adjusted the ingredient proportions to enrich the patty’s flavour and texture, and replaced the original black pepper sauce with hummus to bring freshness and enhance the patty’s nutritional value.

Accreditation Boosts Customers’ Trust and Strengthens Healthy Image

The LN team believes that participating in the “EatSmart Restaurant Star+” Campaign not only has successfully helped their staff fully understand the objective standards for preparing “EatSmart Dishes”, but has also yielded additional benefits. “Achieving accreditation within the Campaign is a recognition. The greater the trust our customers place in us, the more solidified the reputation of our restaurant as a healthy establishment would become.”



All Day Breakfast

Replacing processed foods with natural ingredients, this dish has lower saturated fat and salt but more dietary fibre and vitamins.





Ho Mei-po (Mabel)
Person-in-charge of EverShine

Delivering Positive Energy Through Serving Flavourful and Nutritious Western Cuisine

EverShine, a three-star ESR located in Central, offers a variety of “EatSmart Dishes” along with the serene and cozy ambiance. Ho Mei-po (Mabel), the person-in-charge of EverShine, said, “Many people think healthy foods are bland and tasteless. I hope to change this perception by serving dishes that not only are nutritious but are also rich in texture, flavourful, and visually appealing.” Given the fast-paced lifestyle of Hong Kong citizens, EverShine aims to provide a comfortable environment where customers can enjoy delicious and healthy dishes, thereby rejuvenating both their body and mind while fostering a sense of positivity and vitality.



Exploring Characteristics of Ingredients to Develop Different “EatSmart” Combinations

Mabel believes that the key to cooking healthy Western cuisine lies in achieving a balance in food combinations. When designing the dishes, Mabel will first study the characteristics and nutritional values of different ingredients, and will then strive to incorporate fruit and vegetables into the dishes to aid customers in obtaining a variety of nutrients. For instance, “Sautéed Scallops and Cauliflower with Creamy Sauce” features cauliflower rice instead of grains, increasing the dietary fibre content of the dish in a clever way. Mabel shared, “We deliberately add ingredients such as bell peppers and mushrooms to the cauliflower rice. This not only can enhance the taste and nutritional value of the dish, but can also add various textures to it.”

Sautéed Scallops and Cauliflower with Creamy Sauce

Made with shredded cauliflowers and different vegetables, this dish is rich in texture and filling.

Moreover, with the change of the seasons, the restaurant also selects seasonal vegetables such as chestnuts, pumpkins and mushrooms to prepare hot soups, offering customers additional healthy options besides salads.

Healthy Delicacies Bring Dual Sensory Pleasure

Mabel believes that dishes with an exquisite presentation can help stimulate appetite. Therefore, she makes good use of different natural ingredients to add colour to the dishes. EverShine’s “Red Dragon Fruit Smoothie Bowl” uses red dragon fruit to colour the low-fat sugar-free yoghurt, while incorporating a variety of fruits, such as bananas, baked fruit chips, and heart-healthy flaxseeds, to increase satiety and nutrients. Both delicious and colourful, this healthy dish successfully provides customers with a double enjoyment in terms of taste and visual appeal.



Red Dragon Fruit Smoothie Bowl

Red dragon fruit is rich in dietary fibre and has brightly coloured flesh. Adding fruit to dishes can enhance their colour, aroma, taste and nutritional value.

Food Expo

The “EatSmart Restaurant Star+” Campaign (the Campaign) participated in the Hong Kong Trade Development Council Food Expo 2024 in August. At the event, dietitians from the Department of Health (DH) explained the importance of a balanced diet and the ways of achieving it to the public, with the aim of promoting a culture of healthy eating. Additionally, the ESRs Café Circles and EverShine conducted cooking demonstrations at the venue to introduce their meticulously crafted “EatSmart Dishes”. The event was well-received, with citizens enthusiastically engaging in the quiz game to get souvenirs.



Quail Leg and Cauliflower with Creamy Sauce
Cooking demonstration by EverShine



Steamed Halibut Fillet with Asparagus, Sautéed Spinach and Fennel with Snap Pea Puree
Cooking demonstration by Café Circles

The Importance of Adequate Iron Intake

Inadequate iron intake or excessive iron loss can lead to iron deficiency anaemia, which will affect our health. The DH’s Population Health Survey 2020-22 revealed that the prevalence of iron deficiency among the local population aged 15 to 84 was about 5.7%, whereas that for women of reproductive age (aged 15 to 49) was about 17.5%.

To ensure adequate iron intake, the public is encouraged to maintain a balanced diet, consume a moderate amount of meat, fish and seafood, and eat more dark green vegetables and beans. Furthermore, consuming vitamin-C rich fruits and vegetables during meals can also enhance the absorption of iron.

For more information, please refer to the Joint Recommendation on Iron Intake for Public Particularly for Women of Reproductive Age:

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/joint_recommendation_on_iron_intake_for_public_poster.pdf



Festive EatSmart Dishes Promotion

To assist ESRs in providing promotional information to the public, the Campaign will promote “EatSmart Dishes” for them via its social media platforms free of charge during the festivals listed below.

To participate in the promotion or for enquiries, please contact the Secretariat of the Campaign at 3151 7637 or 3151 7645.



“EatSmart Restaurant Star+”
Facebook Page



“EatSmart Restaurant Star+”
Instagram

JAN 2025
Lunar New Year

FEB
Valentine’s Day

MAY
Mother’s Day

JUN
Father’s Day